

STARS AND STRIPES®

Depleted Duke gets worn down in OT at Maryland

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Convoy vehicles to get 'Mad Max' armor treatment

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Volume 2, No.308 © SS 2005 MIDEAST EDITION

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2005

Iraqi Shiites receive most votes in election

Majority will likely need coalition with Kurds, Allawi candidates Page 3

Happy Valentine's Day



'Lovapalooza 2' inspires kissing in the Philippines

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Traditional marriage gets a holiday push

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Valentine's Day messages inside

18-page insert

A Filipino couple kisses during a Manila event dubbed "Lovapalooza 2."

Photo by AP photo

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NewsTracker ... What's new with old news

States

Study ship repaired: A study abroad vessel that had stopped almost two weeks ago for repairs and inspections in Honolulu Harbor has passed muster and set sail for Asia. The Semester at Sea ship, a floating classroom that takes students to ports around the world, departed Honolulu on Saturday for Ho Chi Minh City. The 700 college students in the program are scheduled to reboard the ship in India. The 591-foot Explorer, carrying 900 passengers and crew members, limped into Honolulu Harbor on Jan. 31 after navigating more than a week's worth of rough seas.

Wal-Mart child labor cases: Wal-Mart Stores Inc., the world's largest retailer, will pay \$135,540 to settle federal charges that it broke child labor laws, the Labor Department said Saturday. The 24 violations, which occurred at stores in Arkansas, Connecticut and New Hampshire, had to do with teenage workers who used hazardous equipment such as a chain saw, paper balers and fork lifts. Wal-Mart denied the allegations but agreed to pay the penalty.

Hurricane fraud: From Miami to Winter Haven to Starke, Floridians have accused their neighbors, colleagues and even their own relatives of taking advantage of the hurricanes by collecting disaster assistance they didn't deserve.

Since Hurricane Charley slammed the state Aug. 13, the first of four last season, more than 110 people throughout Florida have contacted the state attorney general to report fraud against the Federal Emergency Management Agency. They told the attorneys pouring water on their belongings, collecting checks for furniture they didn't own and claiming damage to appliances that weren't working before the storms.

Presidential campaign spending: The battle for Ohio in last year's presidential campaign came with a huge price tag: \$100 million for television advertising alone, according to a new study.

Ohio residents saw "a level of campaign activity unprecedented in modern times," according to the study released last week by five political science professors from the universities of Cincinnati and Akron.

The election turned on Ohio's 20 Electoral College votes. Not until preliminary results were available early on Nov. 3 did Democratic challenger John Kerry concede.

Kerry and his Democratic allies spent \$61 million on television ads compared with \$39 million by President Bush and Republican groups. Together, the two campaigns spent as much on television ads as Bush spent nationwide to win the 2000 Republican nomination, the study said.

World

N. Korea nuclear crisis: China has pledged to try and revive talks aimed at ending North Korea's nuclear programs, after the isolated, Stalinist state's declaration that it had atomic weapons and was boycotting disarmament negotiations.

The United States and other countries involved in the six-party talks have called on China to use its influence over North Korea. Beijing is Pyongyang's last major ally and a key supplier of food and energy to the impoverished dictatorship.

Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing spoke Saturday night by phone with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and said Beijing stands firm in supporting a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula, the Chinese government said Sunday.

India military aid: India has suspended indefinitely military aid to Nepal's fight against Maoist insurgents in a bid to pressure the monarch of the Himalayan nation



Flooding in Pakistan: Flood victims in Pasni rush towards a Pakistani Navy helicopter to receive relief goods Sunday. A second dam burst in southwestern Pakistan on Sunday, pushing the nationwide death toll from a week of torrential rain, floods and avalanches past 360, as troops and rescue workers battled to distribute relief supplies to survivors.

to restore democracy, a news report said Sunday.

India harshly criticized Nepal's King Gyanendra after he dismissed the government and declared a state of emergency on Feb. 1. But analysts initially expressed doubt that New Delhi would withdraw military aid, fearing a Maoist victory would encourage communist rebels in India.

However, the Tribune newspaper quoted unidentified Indian foreign ministry officials as saying New Delhi decided Saturday to stop helping the Royal Nepalese Army and summoned its ambassador in Kathmandu to discuss the situation.

Saudi Arabian elections: Saudi Arabia's Interior Minister dismissed allegations that winners in the first round of the kingdom's nationwide municipal elections are Islamists, and added that voters are free to elect whomever they deem fit.

Dozens of the 640 candidates who lost in the first round of elections said they will contest the results of the poll, claiming that the winning candidates in Riyadh were on a list that claimed to be endorsed by Islamic clerics.

"The leadership and people of the Arab Kingdom of Saudi Arabia refuse these labels," Prince Nayef said late Saturday of characterizations of the winners, in his first comments since results were announced.

American hostages in Colombia: U.S. Embassy officials in Bogotá, Colombia, Friday remembered three Americans who were captured by leftist rebels two years ago. U.S. Ambassador William Wood, in a somber ceremony marking the second anniversary of the capture of the three U.S. military contractors, said he was disappointed that rewards offered by the U.S. government for the Americans have produced insufficient results.

Standing at a podium at the fortress-like embassy above three large photographs of the American hostages, Wood asked God for their prompt return.

"On Sunday, they will have been held for two years, the longest held such U.S. hostages in the world," Wood, who wore a yellow ribbon on his lapel, said during Friday's ceremony.

Israel prisoner release: Israel's Cabinet on Sunday approved a list of names of 500 Palestinian prisoners to be released in coming days and several hundred Palestinian workers returned to jobs in Israel after months of closure, in line with agreements reached at a Mideast summit last week. Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas, meanwhile, was to present a new Cabinet to

his Fatah movement for approval Tuesday. Abbas was expected to appoint new interior, foreign and information ministers, but keep as many members of the current Cabinet, officials said.

Also Sunday, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon on Sunday instructed Israel's law enforcement agencies to act against Jewish extremists who oppose his plan to withdraw from the Gaza Strip.

Togo riots: Togo's Army-installed President Faure Gnassingbé ignored international condemnation Sunday for his handling of street riots in which at least three protesters were killed, instead praising his police force and deporting demonstrators.

Opposition leaders said the number of protesters killed in Saturday's demonstration had risen to seven. Government officials did not confirm the claim.

The death of Gnassingbé's father, long-time President Gnassingbé Eyadema, from a heart attack Feb. 5 led the military to appoint Gnassingbé as his successor in defiance of the country's constitution. Authorities have banned all political rallies and demonstrations during the official two-month mourning period.

Sri Lanka cease-fire: Sri Lanka's fragile cease-fire has come under new strain after the deadly ambush of a top rebel commander and a grenade attack on a guerrilla office, a truce monitor said Sunday.

Unidentified assailants lobbed a grenade at a Tamil Tiger office late Saturday, killing one person and wounding two others. Days earlier, a top insurgent leader was gunned down with five others.

"We recognize the cease-fire is under great strain," said Helen Olafsdottir, spokeswoman for the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission.

She said the rebel leadership had raised "serious concerns" over the grenade attack in a government-held northwest town.

Afghan crash recovery: NATO and Afghan troops retrieved the flight recorder from a crashed Afghan airliner Sunday, an Afghan official said, 10 days after the plane smashed into a mountain in a snowstorm, killing all 104 people on board.

The first clear weather in nearly a week allowed helicopters to ferry troops and investigators to the crash site, 10,000 feet up a snow-covered peak of about 20 miles east of the capital, officials said.

Maj. Gen. Mohammed Moeen Faqir, an Afghan army commander, said the teams had not yet been able to recover any of the bodies.

Photo and stories from wire services

New Army badge

The New York Times reported Sunday that Army troops assigned to combat units that come under fire will be eligible for a new badge that recognizes their efforts separately from ribbons for war or who serve in Iraq or Afghanistan or who support the Pentagon's antiterrorism missions based in the United States, a senior Army official said Saturday.

The Times said the new award, called the Close Combat Badge, was unveiled at a private conference of four-star generals convened in Washington this week-end by Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker, the Army chief of staff, the senior official said.

The Times said the badge was requested by field commanders and reflects their desire to distinguish the efforts of soldiers whose units are "organized to routinely conduct close combat operations and engage in direct combat," the Army official said.

3 U.S. soldiers killed

TIKRIT, Iraq — Three U.S. soldiers were killed when their military vehicle rolled into a canal early Sunday, the military said.

The accident occurred when the men from Task Force Danger were on a combat patrol early Sunday morning near the town of Balad, 50 miles north of Baghdad, the U.S. command said in a statement.

Five soldiers attempting to rescue the men were evacuated for medical treatment but were all expected to return to duty, the military said.

An investigation was launched into the accident, the military said.

3 Iraqis gunned down

BAGHDAD — Gunmen ambushed a car carrying an Iraqi general in a Shiite neighborhood of Baghdad on Sunday, killing him and two companions, police officials said.

Brig. Gen. Jadaun Farhan and his companions were traveling in a white four-wheel drive vehicle through Baghdad's Kazimiyah district when the attack occurred, an Iraqi police officer said on condition of anonymity.

They were killed inside the car, but bodies left for emergency services to recover, witnesses said.

A claim of responsibility for the attack in the name of al-Qaida quickly surfaced on a Web site that often posts statements by Islamic militants.

4 dead in Mosul attack

BAGHDAD — Insurgents attacked a U.S. convoy and a government building near the northern city of Mosul on Sunday, killing at least four people dead, hospital workers said. Two Iraqi National Guard troops were also killed while trying to defuse a roadside bomb.

Insurgents fired on the convoy in Al-Qahira district, just north of Mosul, sparking a battle that left at least four people dead and two wounded, doctors at the Al-Jumhuri Teaching Hospital said.

Insurgents also fired a rocket at the governor's building in Mosul, killing one woman and one man, as well as injuring four others, officials at the hospital said.

From staff and wire reports

"We have a responsibility now to work together for the sake of the people. They have made this magnificent gesture and we should all take it seriously and make it work."

Ibrahim al-Jaafari
Iraqi vice president



Farid Ayar, left, spokesman for the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq, and Adel al-Lami, the commission's chief of electoral office, give the final election results Sunday in Baghdad.

Iraqi election results released

Candidates from majority Shiites win most votes, followed by Kurds

BY JASON KEYSER

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Iraq's majority Shiite Muslims won nearly half the votes in the nation's landmark Jan. 30 election, giving the long-oppressed group significant power but not enough to form a government on its own.

The Shiites likely will have to form a coalition in the 275-member National Assembly with other top vote-getters — the Kurds and Prime Minister Ayad Allawi's list — to push through their agenda and select a president and prime minister. The president and two vice presidents must be elected by a two-thirds majority.

"We have a responsibility now to work together for the sake of the people. They have made this magnificent gesture and we should all take it seriously and make it work," said Iraqi Vice President Ibrahim al-Jaafari, a leading Shiite and possible candidate for prime minister.

Muwafak al-Rubaie, the national security adviser and a Shiite politician, said the Iraqi gov-

ernment will not be formed from one sect or one ethnic group.

"Iraq and its new government can't be built by one faction or shade and it is not possible that only two or three sects participate in this government," al-Rubaie told Al-Arabiya.

"There is one principal we agreed upon, which is the principal of participation and not only agreement, but real participation from all sects."

Barham Saleh, Iraq's deputy prime minister and a top Kurd politician, also called for an inclusive transitional government.

"We cannot afford another era of conflict and turbulence," he said on CNN's 'Late Edition.' "It's time Iraqis enjoyed stability and democracy, and that's what requires bringing all key players and all key communities on board, and we will do so."

Minority Sunni groups, which largely boycotted voting booths and form the core of the insurgency, rejected the election — raising

the prospect of continued violence as Iraqis try to rebuild their country.

In an interview with Al-Jazeera television, Mohammed Bashir of the anti-American Association of Muslim Scholars said the fact that there were no international or U.N. monitors in Iraq made him question the figures.

"Those who boycotted the elections are more than those who took part in it," he said. "Boycotting the election does not mean that the boycotter will renounce his rights."

The Shiite-dominated ticket received more than 4

million votes, or about 48 percent of the total cast. Iraqi election officials said. A Kurdish alliance was second with 2,175 million votes, or 26 percent, and Allawi's list was third with about 1.168 million, or 13.8 percent.

Of Iraq's 14 million eligible voters, 8,550,571 cast ballots for 111 candidate lists, the commission said. About 94,305 were declared invalid. The Iraqi Electoral Com-

mission said the turnout was 58 percent.

Assuming the total vote tally doesn't change, a party will need 30,750 votes to win a seat in the National Assembly. Only 12 parties have made the threshold, under the provisional results.

Once the results are certified, a complex mathematical formula will determine how many seats each of those parties will receive.

If there are no changes to the vote totals, and a small change could dramatically shift the results, the United Iraqi Alliance will have 140 seats in the National Assembly, just a slight majority. The Kurdistan Alliance will hold 75 seats and the Iraqi list will hold 40.

The remaining nine parties will split up 20 seats.

The provisional figures indicate that many Sunni Arabs stayed at home on election day, with only 13,893 votes — or 2 percent — cast in the National Assembly race in Anbar province, a stronghold of the Sunni Muslim insurgency.

U.S. deaths in Iraq

a.m. EST Friday.

The British military has reported 86 deaths; Italy, 20; Ukraine, 18; Poland, 16; Spain, 11; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary, Latvia and Kazakhstan one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,319 U.S. military members

have died, according to AP's count. That includes at least 1,002 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's numbers.

The latest deaths reported by the military: ■ A Marine in Anbar province and a soldier in Babil province were killed in separate vehicle accidents Friday.

The latest identifications reported by the military:

■ No identifications reported.

The Associated Press

As of Saturday, at least 1,457 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 1,111 died as a result of hostile action, the Defense Department said.

The figures include four military civilians. The AP count is seven higher than the Defense Department's tally, last updated at 10

U.S. senators: Compromise essential in Iraq

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A political give-and-take to form a coalition is expected now that election results show no Iraqi group won the votes needed to form a new government on its own, lawmakers said Sunday.

"That's really part of that democracy that we're all so happy that they're moving toward," Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, R-Tenn., said on "Fox News Sunday."

The slate of Shiite Muslims for the 275-member National Assembly received just under half of the votes cast in the Jan. 30 elections, the first since Saddam Hussein was ousted as president in 2003. A two-thirds majority of the assembly chooses the president and two vice presidents, which could push the Shiites to form a coalition with other political groups.

"They're brand new at this and it really depends on how they reach out," Delaware Sen. Joseph

Biden, the top Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, told Fox.

The candidate list dominated by Kurds came in second while the slate put together by Prime Minister Ayad Allawi finished third.

Sunni Muslims, who generally stayed home during the elections and cast just 2 percent of votes, still may be involved politically for the Iraqi system to have legitimacy, Biden said.

"They're going to have to see more Sunnis brought into the constitution writing if there's going to be any legitimacy at the end of the day, and I think we'll see that," Biden said.

Sen. Rick Santorum, the third-ranked Senate Republican, said he thought "it was a good thing that the Shiites can't just sort of dictate how things are to go. And democracy is going to be at work, not just at the polling places but now within the halls of the govern-

What's next for Iraq's lawmakers?

The Associated Press

What's next for the incoming members of Iraq's 275-member National Assembly:

■ **Assembly composition:** Seats in the assembly will be awarded to candidate slates according to their percentage of the national vote. For example, if a list won 40 percent of the votes, it would get roughly 40 percent of the seats in the assembly.

■ **National assembly:** The assembly will serve as a lawmak-

ing body, and it also will help select and approve the president and prime minister. But its most important task is to create a committee to draft a permanent constitution.

■ **Constitution referendum and the next elections:** Iraqis will vote on the proposed constitution by Oct. 15. If they approve, elections for a permanent government to replace the assembly will be held in December. If voters reject the charter, the National Assembly will be

dissolved and a new transitional assembly will be elected in December to take another stab at constitution-writing.

■ **New government:** The newly elected National Assembly will elect a largely ceremonial president and two deputy presidents. The president and two deputies will name a prime minister and Cabinet, subject to the assembly's approval.

■ **How long:** The new government will remain in office for 11 months, until elections in mid-December.

ment. "That's a wonderful accomplishment," said Santorum, R-Pa., on CBS' "Face the Nation." Rep. Charles Rangel, D-N.Y., said the results were good news and that the election itself was

good "by Republican standards." But he questioned whether Americans think it was worth the U.S. and Iraqi casualties.

"We went into Iraq not for elections," Rangel said on NBC's "Meet the Press."

"We went there to knock off Saddam Hussein, but the American people thought it was connected with 9/11, there was weapons of mass destruction, there were connections with al-Qaida. It was all a fraud," he said.

Waiting for results



Two men watch the Iraq election results on television in an electronics store in Baghdad on Sunday. Iraq's majority Shiite Muslims won nearly half the votes in the nation's landmark Jan. 30 election, giving the long-oppressed group significant power but not enough to form a government on its own.

No Arab consensus on Iraqi elections

The Associated Press

CAIRO, Egypt — Two weeks after Iraq's historic elections and with final results now out, a fierce debate continues in the Arab world over what the elections mean and how significant they will prove.

Despite waves of praise of the vote by U.S. leaders, opinions in the Middle East vary sharply — with some analysts calling the vote a success, others blaming it for new violence in Iraq and still others warning the winners against misinterpreting results.

It would be a "major mistake" if the main Shiite political alliance that won nearly half the votes "misreads and misinter-

stands the results of Jan. 30 elections by imagining that they had achieved a landslide victory in clean elections," said Adnan Hussein, an Iraqi Shiite, writing Sunday in the London-based pan Arab daily Asharq Al-Awsat, before final results were announced but after the Shiite victory had become widely apparent.

Iraqis "won't accept any other authoritarian regime even if it was in the name of religion," Hussein warned.

Others looked at the elections, despite the ongoing violence and low turnout by Sunni groups, as part of spreading reforms in the region.

The elections, following votes in Afghanistan and the Palestin-

ian territories, "deal a strong blow to the forces that tried to undermine it" and "gave a new momentum to the idea of spreading democracy in the region," Jordanian analyst Saleem Nematt wrote Sunday in the pan Arab daily Al-Hayat.

Others saw the continued presence of U.S. forces in Iraq and the unabated insurgency as signs that the election still had not improved the daily lives of Iraqis.

One editorial in the pro-government Al-Ahram daily in Egypt blamed the Jan. 30 elections for the "bloody unrest that is sweeping Iraq" and said Iraq wouldn't be stable until elections occurred under international troops instead of under U.S.-led occupation troops.

Some Iraqis question Shiite leader's loyalty

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Abdul-Aziz al-Hakim, the turbaned pro-Iranian cleric leading the Shiite ticket that won Iraq's national elections, is a longtime ally of Tehran's religious establishment who led an anti-Saddam Hussein militia for two decades from exile.

Aged in his 50s, al-Hakim was born in the holy, southern Shiite city of Najaf, Iraq, and is the son of the late Grand Ayatollah Mohsen al-Hakim, one of the leading Shiite clerics of the 20th century. A student of Najaf's Hawza al-Ulmiyah, Shiite Islam's centuries old seminary, al-Hakim also came under the tutelage of Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Baqir al-Sadr, leader of Iraq's first Shiite political party, the Islamic Dawa, who was killed by Saddam's regime in 1980.

Influenced by both his father and al-Sadr, al-Hakim became an active opponent of Saddam, a secular Sunni who violently repressed opposition Shiite activists in Iraq. Such retribution forced al-Hakim and his elder brother, Mohammad Baqir al-Hakim, to flee into Shiite-run Iraq in the early 1980s.

From there, Abdul-Aziz al-Hakim led the Iran-backed Badr Brigades, the military wing of Iraq's largest opposition Shiite party, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, in a violent cross border struggle against Saddam's forces.

Ahead of the U.S.-led 2003 invasion of Iraq, al-Hakim played a central role in efforts to oust Iraq's opposition to prepare post-Saddam Iraq's future political groundwork.

Following the Iraqi dictator's topple, al-Hakim returned to Iraq in April 2003 ahead of his elder brother, who had become a revered ayatollah and leader of

SCIRI. That was, however, until his Aug. 29, 2003, al-Qaida-linked car bomb assassination, an attack that killed 124 others.

The former militia leader was chosen to replace his slain brother as head of Iraq's most influential political force and was later appointed to the U.S.-appointed Governing Council.

His increasing prominence, matched with his mul-lah-like dress and close Iranian ties, led many — including the United States — to fear that Iraq was heading toward closer ties with Iran, and, possibly, the establishment of a government based on Iran's theocratic model.

Soothing U.S., Iraqi and regional fears that the Sistani-backed ticket will force closer ties with Iran, which Iraq fought in a 1980-88 war, al-Hakim has insisted he has no intention of imposing an Iran-style clerical state on this war-ravaged country.

Instead, he has promised to reach out to disaffected Sunnis and others in the drafting of a permanent constitution — the major task of the new assembly.

Al-Hakim, a pragmatist who met President Bush at the White House in January 2004, has seemed unwilling to challenge the United States head-on about crafting a timetable for its military withdrawal. Instead, he has advocated a policy of negotiation to secure the capture of coalition forces from Iraq once a formal Iraqi government has been created.



al-Hakim



PHOTOS BY STEVE LIEWER/Stars and Stripes

Above: Staff Sgt. Austin "John-o" Williams of the 518th Gun Truck Company, left, consults with the commander of the Iraqi Express, Staff Sgt. Dan Miller, during a stop in southern Iraq on Nov. 1. Right: Staff Sgt. David Cardoso secures a load of tires on the back of his flatbed Heavy Equipment Truck at Camp Scania in central Iraq on Nov. 1. Cardoso is a truck driver for the 1487th Transportation Company of the Ohio National Guard, one of several units running the daily Iraqi Express.



Protecting U.S. troops, convoys with armor

BY JOHN HENDREN
Los Angeles Times

New rules for upgrading vehicles take effect Tuesday

CAMP NAVISTAR, Kuwait — The green trucks of the Iraqi Express line up daily along the Iraq-Kuwait border in a pre-dawn ritual for a trip that lasts four days and covers 1,200 miles.

Behind a makeshift steel plate on the door of a cargo truck, Sgt. Cesar Feliciano is nervous. His pregnant wife in Puerto Rico doesn't know he's riding a bomb magnet across Iraq on this day for the first time, or that he'll keep doing so every week this year.

"I don't tell my family about it, going on convoys, I tell them I'm going to be in a safe place, so they don't worry about it," he says. "I hope nothing happens."

But on at least one out of every five trips, drivers say, something does happen. Eighteen months after insurgents first began to line Iraqi roads with bombs, U.S. military vehicles continue to brave Iraq's most perilous roadways without armor.

Fresh Iraqi convoys cross the dusty term from Kuwait into Iraq in the largest troop rotation

in U.S. military history. Starting Tuesday, no American military vehicle will travel outside a protected base without some sort of armor, military officials said last week. This is the result of a concentrated push after a National Guardsman confronted Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld in December and complained that soldiers were forced to scavenge for makeshift "hill-billy armor" to protect themselves on the trip into Iraq.

Nevertheless, efforts to further protect American soldiers, much of it undertaken on an ad hoc basis at military bases in Kuwait, are still not finished. After Tuesday, one in every about four of the 25,300 military vehicles outside American bases will still have only the makeshift steel plates known to soldiers as "Mad Max" or hillbilly armor.

About 6,000 unarmored vehicles will be confined to the walled

base camps.

The makeshift armor has saved many lives and mechanics said some survivors have described their accounts in writing. Military leaders concede the improvised armor is only a temporary measure until more factory-made armor kits can be distributed.

"People want to build gunships, but we just can't do that."

Capt. Angelica Martinez
Camp Buehring

Trucks with the temporary armor will still be used in Iraq until June, when the armor is to be upgraded, military officials told the Senate Armed Service Committee last week. Insurgents began using roadside bombs — or improvised explosive devices, known as IEDs — in the summer of 2003. As vehicles have been armored, insurgents have upped the ante, using larger, deadlier bombs.

Protection is getting better,

commanders say, but there are few sure things in Iraq when it comes to safety.

"I would say the next rotation of troops will be better protected than this rotation of troops, which is better protected than the previous rotation of troops," said Brig. Gen. Michael Milano, of the Coalition Forces Land Component Command. "There are no guarantees. But we're doing — and we're obligated to do — everything we can to provide as much protection as we can to anybody operating in Iraq."

When Chief Warrant Officer Randall Menough's crew began fashioning makeshift armor at Camp Buehring in Kuwait last year, there was no Army directive to Mad Max their vehicles. But like every maintenance company supervisor, he did so anyway.

"I've been in the Army for 18 years and this is the most important thing I've done in my mili-

tary career," Menough said.

The company commander, Capt. Angelica Martinez, said some units ask for more armor than can be provided.

"People want to build gunships, but we just can't do that," Martinez said.

As outgoing troops reach Kuwait, their armor is removed for use on incoming vehicles.

The effort is expanding. At an undisclosed site in central Kuwait, Chuck Wentworth, a Defense Department project manager, oversees 177 workers who bolt on the Level 2 armor. Two weeks ago, he had 34 workers. Soon he'll have 220.

As long as American troops remain in Iraq, the Iraqi Express and smaller convoys throughout the country will continue making their trips, U.S. commanders say. For truckers such as Spc. Eric Lee, that means not knowing how much time this year they will spend in a truck with rust-colored plates welded onto its doors.

"This is makeshift armor," said the 25-year-old Minneapolis native on his first day. "But it's better than no armor."

Turkey takes command in Afghanistan

New leadership for NATO troops scheduled to last six months

BY STEPHEN GRAHAM
The Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Turkey took command of NATO-led troops in Afghanistan Sunday for six months in which the alliance plans to relieve U.S. forces at the west and protect elections to the country's first post-Taliban parliament.

Turkish Army Lt. Gen. Ethem Erdagi took charge of the 8,500-strong International Security Assistance Force from Euro-corp, which is dominated by French and German troops, at a ceremony at the force's headquarters in the Afghan capital.

Under its outgoing French commander, Lt. Gen. Jean-Louis Py, the multinational

force expanded from Kabul across a swath of northern Afghanistan and helped provide security for October elections that installed Hamid Karzai as the country's first directly elected president.

During Turkey's tenure, the force is also expected to take charge in the west, with countries such as Spain, Italy and Lithuania supplying extra troops. Parliamentary elections are expected to be held in the summer.

In a speech to dignitaries including NATO officials and Afghanistan's defense and interior ministers, Erdagi said the growing NATO mission and Afghanistan's democratic transition had already created "a new era where the threat of terror and fear no longer has a place in this country."

"I want to stress our intent, commitment and determination to progress in these areas, and carry forward the good work we have inherited from our predecessors," he said.

The NATO force is currently separate from the 18,000-strong U.S.-led coalition hunting Taliban and al-Qaida holdouts mainly in the south and east, though alliance members are discussing how to combine them.

Some American forces in the west managing small bases known as provincial reconstruction teams are expected to come under NATO control.

Erdagi said Turkey also intended to provide troops for a provincial team, but declined to give details.



Turkish Army Lt. Gen. Ethem Erdagi takes part in the International Security Assistance Force change of command ceremony in Kabul, Afghanistan, on Sunday.

From Dresden to Baghdad, an evolution

Attack was one of many to target civilians ...

BY RON JENSEN
Stars and Stripes

Hundreds of bombers opened their bellies and thousands of bombs tumbled out, screaming eastward and landing willfully on the medieval German city of Dresden.

The first bombing took place on the night of Feb. 13, 1945, but the attack continued throughout the next day. British bombers flew at night; American aircraft worked the day shift.

The city burned and tens of thousands died, mostly civilians.

Dresden burns still. History has been revised, lowering the number of dead from more than 100,000 to less than half that and unveiling the city's military role that had been denied for decades.

The firebombing of Dresden 60 years ago still symbolizes the horror aerial bombing can impose on a civilian population.

"It seemed as if the very air was on fire," one survivor recalled in a memoir.

The very idea of bombing from the air was so horrific it was outlawed even before it existed. At the Hague Conference of 1899, a ban was placed on dropping bombs from balloons or "any other new method."

"These were visionaries that could foresee what might happen," said Peter Mutton, a historian at the Imperial War Museum at Duxford, England.

When World War I began in 1914, aviation was a tool for reconnaissance. The war would be won on the ground, commanders on both sides believed.

The bloody stalemate of the Western Front forced a rethinking. The Germans had built a long-range bomber and in 1918 their attacks on London struck mostly at British morale.

"The (physical) damage was out of proportion with the psychological damage," said Bridget Pollard, who researched strategic bombing for the Duxford museum.

The tide had turned. Aviation was a viable weapon. For the rest of the war, more attention and money were directed at developing air forces capable of dropping

bombs.

In the 1930s, both Germany and England developed bombers for the coming conflict. When

fighting began, each was capable of bombing the other. The problem, however, was the crude method of dropping heavy explosives from above.

"A hit was sort of getting within a mile," Pollard said.

Technology did improve. Navigational equipment and bomb-sights made it easier to find a specific target on the ground below.

But bombs still fell from aircraft and were ultimately guided by gravity and air currents. Civilian deaths and damage to nonmilitary sights were tremendous.

As technology improved, attacks from both sides believed bombing

around a target, he said, to determine if any or how many buildings might be hit beyond the main target.

Next, use of a weapon is considered, he said. Perhaps a bomb will be used that will fall into the earth below the building before it explodes, "letting the earth do some work for us" by absorbing the blast, Reiman said.

The third tier examines the effects of the weapon beyond the target and will determine the angle used by the attacking aircraft to deliver the weapon.

The final look is an estimate of how many people beyond the target likely will be killed in the attack.

"I have to tell you, it's a very conservative estimate that we use," Reiman said. "It goes to worst case."

The decision to bomb may be seen as the chain of command, going as high as the secretary of defense, if the estimated casualty figure is high.



A file photo of the city of Dresden, Germany, shows the ruined city hall from the tower of the city hall. According to German officials, 35,000 people were killed during U.S.-British air attacks on Feb. 13 and 14, 1945.

civilians would break their spirit and force an end to the war. Civilian deaths from bombing continued during wars in both Korea and Vietnam. The bombers themselves had been improved. Targeting was more exact thanks to aerial photography.

But bombs were still "dumb iron," said Tom Hughes, professor of military history at the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies at Maxwell AFB, Ala.

"Through the 1940s and 50s and most of the 1960s, bombing was pretty much the same as it was in World War II," Hughes said in a telephone interview.

An enduring image of the Viet-

nam War is that of bombs raining from the undersides of B-52s over North Vietnam. North Vietnamese interviewed after the war said they trembled in fear at the mere sound of the bombers.

By the end of the war, precision-guided munitions were part of the arsenal. With them came a new philosophy: Killing women and children on the ground, destroying schools and hospitals, was no longer a necessary part of war.

For America, the first large use of precision-guided munitions was in the 1991 Persian Gulf War. Even then, however, only 10 percent to 12 percent of bombs were "smart"

ones.

"The American people don't get a sense of that," Hughes said, because so many cockpit videos of smart bombs played on television screens.

Now, he said, the percentage has flipped. Nearly all munitions dropped from aircraft in the battles for Afghanistan and Iraq have been precision-guided.

Civilian casualties still occur. The organization Iraq Body Count estimates between 16,000 and 18,000 civilians have been killed since America invaded Iraq in March 2003.

In Iraq, the Air Force is continually upgrading its ability to strike targets with enough precision to minimize or eliminate unintended damage and deaths.

"We don't carpet bomb anymore," said Col. Bob Chapman, director of operations for Central Air Force Command at Shaw Air Force Base, S.C.

With aerial bombing a central part of America's battle strategy — the war in Kosovo was fought exclusively from the air — the technology makes a repeat of Dresden nearly impossible.

Yet a comment about bombing raids from an Iraqi man reported in news accounts — "Nowhere felt safe and there was nothing we could do," could have come from London or Tokyo or Hanoi in wars past.

Furthermore, Dresden was not unique for World War II. Scores of German and Japanese cities endured the wrath of Allied bombs.

Pollard said, "Dresden is a raid at the end of the war where everything goes right. They find the target. They hit the target. The target burns."

That, she said, is what they'd been trying to do all along.

E-mail Ron Jensen at: jensenr@mail.ustrs.com

... But in Iraq, smart bombs aim to reduce 'collateral damage'

One truth in Iraq, said Col. Bob Chapman, is the minds and hearts of Iraqis won't be won if America drops bombs on them.

"That's why, the director of operations for U.S. Central Air Force Command said, great care is taken in the country before a bomb is dropped."

"We take collateral damage mitigation very seriously," he said in a telephone interview from Shaw Air Force Base, S.C. "Almost every weapon we drop is a precision munition now."

Every day in Iraq, Air Force planes drop bombs, providing close air support for troops on the ground and going after "high value targets," such as leaders of the stubborn insurgency.

But in both cases, Air Force officers said, they try to limit or eliminate damage to noncombatants.

"We do a four-tier analysis on every target we go after," said Maj. Jeff Reiman, an intelligence targeter at Shaw.

First, planners draw a circle



A statue of Saddam Hussein remains standing April 12, 2003, amidst the rubble of the Iraqi Air Force headquarters that was destroyed by U.S. bombings.

For a close air support mission, the same analysis is used, but the determining factor may be different.

"We're going to deliver fire and protect American lives when we need to," Reiman said.

The Air Force continues to upgrade its technology in the region to better choose its targets. The unmanned aircraft called Predator can trace circles above a target and deliver video to commanders who make bombing decisions.

Recently, Chapman said, the Air Force began using the GBU-38, a 500-pound bomb guided by satellite, to hit targets from the air to the earth, he said.

"We're able to contain the blast within that building," he said.

More recently, said Lt. Col. Greg Harbin, CENTAF deputy director of operations, air controllers traveling with the Army received ROVER — a remotely-operated video enhanced receiver. This allows a controller to see on a laptop computer what a pilot sees on the cockpit video screen.

He said this helps in urban environments where buildings all look the same and the pilot may not recognize the target.

"To the guy on the ground, it may look like three buildings," he said. But the pilot may see only one building with a common roof.

With ROVER, the ground controller will know if the pilot has identified the wrong target.

"I would have loved to have this on our trip to Baghdad the first time," said Col. Byron Risner, CENTAF chief of combat operations at the Combined Air Operations Center, Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar, who accompanied the 3rd Infantry Division on the initial invasion of Iraq.

Back then, he said, controllers were able to call in airstrikes only on what they could see from the ground.

The officers said more efforts to improve targeting would be made as the insurgency continues along with America's attempt to fight it.

"We're not resting on our laurels," said Chapman.

— Ron Jensen

Terror suspect claims abuse in U.S. custody

Freed Australian says he was shocked, beaten and sexually humiliated in Egypt, Gitmo

BY ROD MCGUIRE
The Associated Press

CANBERRA, Australia — An Australian terror suspect released from U.S. custody at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, says he was beaten, given electric shocks, sexually humiliated and nearly drowned while under U.S. supervision.

Mamdouh Habib, an Egyptian-born former coffee shop owner and father of four, returned to his hometown of Sydney last month after being held for more than three years without charge.

In an interview aired Sunday, Habib told Australia's Nine Net-

work's public affairs program "60 Minutes" that he was arrested in Pakistan a few weeks after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the United States and was held as a terror suspect for 30 months.

He said three weeks after his capture, he was transferred to Egypt where he was tortured daily for six months before he was sent via Afghanistan to the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay.

He told the TV program that an interrogator once told him his family had been killed, even though it hadn't. He also claimed to have been stripped naked and threatened to be placed with a

dog he was told was trained to sexually assault humans. The TV program did not say where this alleged treatment took place.

Habib also alleged he was administered drugs and isolated in solitary confinement "to make me crazy."

"I never see the sun, I never have a shower like a human being, I never have a cup to drink, I never treated like a human being," he told Nine.

Habib was paid for the interview with the Australian TV program.

In a separate interview published by The New York Times on Sunday, he said interrogators in

Egypt kicked him and put cigarettes out on his chest. At Guantanamo, Americans hit his head against the floor, he said, and a female interrogator smeared what appeared to be menstrual blood on his face in an effort to humiliate him.

Because of the torture, Habib said he falsely confessed to training the al-Qaida hijackers who flew airliners into buildings in New York and Washington.

"I make them happy, I want to save myself," Habib told Nine.

"No one should be treated in the way people are treated in Cuba."

His claims could not be independently verified, but other U.S.

terrorism suspects have made similar allegations in the past.

Habib's release was announced days after court documents were made public detailing claims the U.S. government had transferred him to Egypt so he could be tortured.

Foreign Minister Alexander Downer, however, said earlier Sunday that he did not believe Washington freed Habib because it was sensitive about the torture claims. "I have no advice to that effect at all," he told Nine.

Downer said Washington did not charge Habib because it didn't want to make evidence about his alleged involvement and training with al-Qaida public. He did not elaborate.

Missing the little things

Navy reservist with 11 kids heads to Iraq

BY JOHN GEROME
The Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Johnnie Chennault has no regrets about joining the Navy Reserve, even though it means he's going to Iraq later this month.

But he does worry about not being around to help take care of his house full of 11 kids.

"Leaving my children, leaving my wife for so long, you're going to miss all the little things as the kids grow up," he said.

Chennault and his wife Ronda have a full range of children of all ages growing up at their home in Springfield, a small town about 30 miles north of Nashville: Terri, 17; Stephen, 15; Jobie, 14; Joshua, 12; Zakari, 8; Johnnie IV, 7; Mikal, 6; Syerra, 4; Gracie, 3; Jakob, 2; and Niklaus, 8 months.

"Yeah, I have more kids than most people, but I don't think my

kids are any more important to me than somebody who has two kids. His kids are important to him, too. I just have more to miss."

The Chennaults knew deployment was possible when he joined the Navy's Construction Battalion, the famed Seabees, two years ago.

Chennault, 29, had inquired about enlisting in the Army, the Air Force, the Marines and the Navy, but they all told him it was against policy to take someone who has that many children to support on a newly enlisted man's pay. The Navy, however, said that wouldn't matter if he joined the Reserves.

But with the war in Iraq, his unit was called up for duty, and he was to leave Sunday for training at Gulfport, Miss., and would then go on to Iraq.

"After 9/11 it just seemed like a



Navy reservist Johnnie Chennault and his wife Ronda at home with their 11 children, in Springfield, Tenn., on Friday. From left are, Stephen, 15; Jakob, 2; Jobie, 14; Mikal, 6; Syerra, 4; Gracie, 3; Johnnie IV, 7; Joshua, 12; Zakari, 8; Terri, 17; and eight-month-old Niklaus. Chennault was to leave for training Sunday and then to Iraq later.

big need, like there was something else I could do," Chennault said. "My country has done so much for me and my family — why couldn't I take a little time out and do something for it?"

His employer, Sears, will make up the difference in pay while he's in Iraq, an assignment Chennault thinks will last seven or eight months.

He has worked for Sears for nine years, mostly as an auto mechanic. But he recently took a promotion to assistant manager in the home department.

"He's big-hearted, and he'd do whatever it takes to help someone else out," said his boss, Chris Nokes. "I wish he wasn't going. I just hope he comes home safe."

After entering the reserves, Chennault remained committed to his military service. He recalls that when the Navy announced that his unit was getting called up, his name wasn't on the initial deployment list because of a clerical error.

"I raised my hand and the first question I asked was, 'Why am I not going?' ... I said, 'Look, I don't think it's fair for my brothers and sisters here to be going. They have children, and their children

are just as important to them as mine are to me.'"

Chennault's wife is supportive. "We go to a really good church, and they talk in there a lot about the husband's and the wife's role, what the Bible says is the husband's and wife's role," she explained. "And my role is to support my husband. My mother told me when I got married, 'Your life is about him, and you need to be there for him.'"

They met while working on the General Jackson excursion boat and married when she was 25 and he was 19. Four of the children are heirs from a previous marriage.

While her husband is away, Ronda Chennault will rely more on her parents and on their church, South Haven Baptist. The children will have to do more for themselves.

Still, she worries. "I have trouble sleeping when he's not here. That's one of the hardest things," she said.

She knows she's going to miss him, but Ronda Chennault is proud of the example her husband is setting.

"It's important for the kids to see that he can't just wassell out of the duty that he volunteered for," she said.

30 Marines come home from Iraq

The Associated Press

CHICOPEE, Mass. — The arrival home Saturday after seven months in Iraq couldn't have any sooner for Marine Lance Cpl. Anthony D'Amato, Jr., whose pregnant wife, Heidi, greeted him at Westover Air Reserve Base.

"Now my job can be to be with my family, instead of being over there," said D'Amato, 23, a computer specialist whose wife is eight months pregnant. "It's amazing. There are no words that can describe how I feel right now."

D'Amato was among 30 Marines from Wing Support Squadron, 472 Detachment B, which arrived home after a seven-month deployment supporting aircraft at an air base in the Al-Anbar province. About 100 family members and friends greeted them in Chicopee.

Family members carries signs that read "welcome home" and "we love you." Another 100 members of the detachment remain in Iraq and are due to return in a few weeks.

There were no deaths from this detachment, said Sgt. Sherry Haetinger.

The Marines returned to the United States on Wednesday in Pennsylvania, and had a police escort for their bus trip Saturday. Members of the detachment are from Massachusetts, Connecticut and New York.

Cpl. Amber Keddy, 26, was impressed that a dozen members of her family greeted her in Chicopee.

"It's really weird and surreal," said Keddy, a combat engineer who in civilian life is on a waiting list to become a firefighter in Plymouth. "It's beautiful to see my beautiful family."



Happy Valentine's Day, SGT Anderson! Yes, I'll be your Valentine! I love you and miss you so much! All my love, Crystal



Tim Murphy

We love you and we miss you.

Happy Valentine's Day!

Love, Lauren, Timmy, and Ike.

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IN THE WORLD

Germany rejects new role for NATO

BY PAUL AMES
The Associated Press

MUNICH, Germany — German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer on Sunday rejected calls for NATO to play a security role in Iraq by offering to protect U.N. operations there.

"I don't see any added value for NATO in Iraq," Fischer told a security conference. He spoke in reply to a suggestion by Senator Joseph Lieberman, D-Conn., that the alliance could protect the United Nations.

NATO's role in Iraq has been limited to a small training mission in Baghdad and logistics support to a Polish-led force serving with the U.S. coalition. Iraq war opponents led by France and Germany have prevented the alliance developing a wider role, and have refused to send their own troops, even on the training mission.

Fischer said Germany would not veto a NATO decision to do more, if it was backed by the other 25 allies. But he insisted "we will not be sending soldiers to Iraq."

NATO allies have been seeking to put past divisions over the Iraq war behind them in a series of meetings this month due to culminate in a Brussels summit on Feb. 22 attended by President Bush and other alliance leaders.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan told the conference the United Nations could help the Iraqis with reconstruction and technical support in drawing up a constitution and holding more elections.

But he ruled out a U.N. security role, saying the world body was unlikely to find the



German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer talks with U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan at the 41st Munich Conference on Security Policy in southern Germany on Sunday.

Canada to increase Afghanistan force

The Associated Press

MUNICH, Germany — Canada will nearly double the number of troops it has in Afghanistan by this summer and is considering sending a combat brigade to the Kandahar region early next year, Defense Minister Bill Graham said Sunday.

Canada currently has some 600 troops serving in the Afghan capital of Kabul with NATO's International Security Assistance Force, and plans to put a provincial reconstruction team, or PRT, in the southern city of Kandahar by August, Graham said.

necessary "blue helmet" troops for Iraq.

Fischer emphasized German efforts to help Iraq in other ways — through military and police training outside the country, economic aid and debt relief.

NATO's top commander on Saturday signaled continued difficulties finding troops and funding, saying an alliance-run military academy for Iraqi officers outside Baghdad is unlikely to be ready before September — months later than originally planned.

The PRT, which aims to boost stability while working on humanitarian projects such as building schools and clinics, would be part of an overall expansion of peacekeepers into the southern region later this year.

"Canada will be there for establishing a PRT in Kandahar in August, that will be the first step," Graham told the AP on the sidelines of an international security conference in Munich. "We will have the 600 in Kabul still, so that means we'll be up to the 1,000 to 1,100 range."

"The mission still needs to be properly funded, and of course manning remains a concern," U.S. Gen. James L. Jones, Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, told reporters. "It is something that hasn't been completely resolved."

In December, NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer was hopeful the academy could be ready by spring. Jones said September was now the target date because more renovation work was needed.

Annan calls for overhaul of security

BY PAUL AMES
The Associated Press

MUNICH, Germany — United Nations chief Kofi Annan appealed Sunday for Europe and the United States to support a radical overhaul of international security to combat terrorism, the spread of weapons of mass destruction and regional conflicts.

"We must strengthen our collective defenses," Annan told a conference of world security officials. He said the plans represented the most far-reaching reform of the international security system since the United Nations was founded in 1945.

They call for tougher rules to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, a trust fund to help poorer nations fight terrorism, a drive to strengthen public health defense against germ warfare and a more proactive approach to allow for quicker action against potential threats.

"In today's world we may also face threats that are not imminent, but which could become actual with little or no warning and which could destabilize scenarios if left unaddressed," Annan said.

To convince nations of the need for new measures, Annan presented an apocalyptic vision of the threats facing nations today.

"If New York or London or Paris or Berlin were hit by a nuclear terrorist attack, it might not only kill hundreds of thousands in an instant," Annan warned. "It could also devastate the global economy, thereby plunging millions into poverty in developing nations."

Air travel, he said, could spread deadly diseases quickly though the world; civil war in one country can destabilize whole regions and form bases for terrorism or organized crime with global reach.

In a more immediate appeal, Annan urged NATO and the European Union to do more to help end the conflict and humanitarian disaster in Sudan's Darfur region.

"People are dying every single day, while we fail to protect them," he said.

Annan's speech was the first by a U.N. secretary-general to the annual Munich conference that draws security chiefs from around the world.

Iran refuses to back away from plans for reactor

BY ALI AKBAR DAREINI
The Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asfeli rejected a European demand to stop building a heavy water nuclear reactor in return for a light-water reactor, hardening Iran's position on a key part of its nuclear facilities that critics claim is part of a weapons program.

Iran had indicated in the past that its suspension of uranium enrichment activities would not include construction of a heavy water reactor but Sunday's announcement is its clearest statement so far of its nuclear program plans.

The statement indicates the unresolved differences between Iranian and European negotiators, who continue their talks on Iran's nuclear program as the United States escalates its criticism of Iran.

Asfeli said Iran plans to become a major nuclear fuel supplier in 15 years, part of a program that Iran says is for peaceful domestic energy purposes but Washington says is aimed at producing an atomic bomb.

"We intend to turn into an im-

"We intend to turn into an important and a major player in the nuclear fuel supply market. ..."

Hamid Reza Asfeli
Foreign Ministry spokesman

portant and a major player in the nuclear fuel supply market in the next 15 years because there will be (an) energy shortage in the future," Asfeli said.

Asfeli rejected a proposal by European negotiators to stop building a 40-megawatt heavy water nuclear reactor near Arak, in cen-

tral Iran, in return for a light-water reactor. Iran says it has been adamant in recent days that Iran won't scrap its nuclear program, suspected by Washington as a program to produce a nuclear bomb.

Asfeli said Iran had long and intensive talks with Europeans this week where negotiators explained Iran's insistence on its nuclear fuel program.

The plants in question can be used to enrich uranium, a critical part in nuclear programs. Uranium enriched to low grades is used for fuel in nuclear reactors, but further enrichment makes it suitable for atomic bombs.

Germany's Fischer urges active U.S. role in Iraq

The Associated Press

MUNICH, Germany — German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer on Sunday called for the United States to play a more active role in European-led diplomatic efforts to ensure Iran does not develop nuclear weapons.

"If the United States were to engage positively, and I'm aware of how difficult that is, it would substantially strengthen the European effort," Fischer said.

He gave a cautious response to a U.S. drive for the Europeans to threaten Iran with U.N. sanctions if it fails to give viable guarantees that its nuclear program is peaceful.

"If the whole process collapsed then we would have to go to the (U.N.) Security Council," Fischer said. However, he suggested sanctions could strengthen hardline elements in the Iranian regime and weaken democrats.

Fischer restated a call from German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder on Saturday for the United States to offer incentives to the Iranians for cooperating. The Europeans are proposing Iran get financial and technical support and trade talks in exchange for greater transparency.

The United States has backed a tougher line, refusing to rule out military strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities suspected of working on weapons.

Skyscraper burns in Spain

BY ED McCULLOUGH
The Associated Press

MADRID, Spain — Madrid's worst fire in memory blazed in one of the city's tallest office buildings Sunday, orange flames bursting through charred windows more than 13 hours after it began.

"This is the biggest fire ... this city has ever had," Mayor Alberto Ruiz-Gallardon told reporters at a downtown intersection in front of the blackened hulk of twisted wreckage.

The 32-story Windsor Building in Madrid's business and banking district was virtually empty when the first alarm went off on Saturday night at 11:20 p.m. There were no fatalities, and only one of the seven firefighters who suffered smoke inhalation remained hospitalized Sunday, he said.

The cause of the fire was not immediately determined.

Firefighters were still unable to enter the building on Sunday afternoon because of the heat, smoke and risk of injury. At their peak, temperatures reached 1,472 Fahrenheit, said Javier Sanz, head of Madrid's firefighters.

Several top floors collapsed onto lower ones, and firefighter official Fernando Munilla acknowledged the entire building — which at about 350 feet high is among the 10 tallest in Madrid — could collapse.

"If the partial collapses keep happening, it would be lying to say it's impossible that the whole building couldn't fall down," he said.

Gallardon said that due to the danger of the building collapsing, neighboring businesses would be barred from opening, possibly until Wednesday, while the operation of three subway lines running under or near the damaged building would be curtailed.



A blackened Windsor Building is seen Sunday after being engulfed in a fire in Madrid, Spain. A raging fire engulfed the 32-story office building sending flaming chunks of the facade cascading.

"Technically we can't say that the fire is under control," Gallardon said. "The situation is still critical."

"It gives you a sense of insecurity" to think that fire could destroy a modern building so fast, said Paola Mendez, an office worker from another part of town. "It's not that old. Was it well built?"

Pope returns to pulpit and greets the faithful

BY VICTOR L. SIMPSON
The Associated Press

VATICAN CITY — Returning to the world's most storied pulpit for the first time since his health crisis, Pope John Paul II addressed a sea of worshippers Sunday from his studio in St. Peter's Square and gave with his presence what no cardinal's words could deliver: a strong assurance that he's on the rebound.

An aide delivered most of the message, but at the very end the pope's voice rang out clearly — "Happy Sunday to everybody. Thank you."

The 84-year-old pontiff looked alert as he waved to the crowd with a trembling hand. He gave a brief greeting before Argentine Archbishop Leonardo Sandri carried on with the message. Thousands of pilgrims broke into applause and some shouted "Viva il Papa" — Long live the pope.

"We meet again in this place to praise the Lord," the pope said in his message.

In a subtle rebuttal to rumors that he might step down, the pope told the crowd: "I always need your help before the Lord, for carrying out my mission that Jesus entrusted to me."

The Pope's Sunday address at St. Peter's is a cherished weekly tradition for Roman Catholics and its resumption was significant



Pope John Paul II

come as a big relief for believers around the world. Thousands of people packed the square to catch a glimpse of the pope, who gave the blessing in his own voice.

"I thought he was amazing, given his age," said Catherine Kelly, visiting from Newcastle, England.

His message included an appeal for a kidnapped Italian journalist, Giuliana Sgrena, and others held hostage in Iraq.

John Paul's return to the Vatican coincided with his weekend spiritual retreat beginning Sunday, scheduled before he fell ill. During that period all audiences will be suspended, including the pontiff's customary Wednesday public audience.

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A Serbian flag waves over Serbian President Boris Tadic, center, as he arrives in the Serb-populated village of Strpce in Kosovo on Sunday.

Serbian president asserts claim to U.N.-run province

BY MISHA SAVIC

The Associated Press

SILOVO, Serbia-Montenegro — Serbian President Boris Tadic began his tour of Kosovo on Sunday by reasserting his country's claim over the southern province that has been an international protectorate for more than five years.

"This is Serbia!" Tadic said, immediately upon arriving in the Serb-populated village of Silovo, in the eastern part of the ethnic Albanian-dominated province.

He was greeted by several hundred locals living in one of the besieged Serb enclaves under the protection of NATO peace troops and governed by a U.N. mission. The mission was established in Kosovo in 1999 when a war between Serbian troops and ethnic Albanian separatists ended with NATO bombing of Serb targets.

About 100,000 Serbs now remain in Kosovo, about one-third of their prewar population here, and face occasional attacks and harassment by ethnic Albanian militants. "I don't have a magic wand to

fix all the problems," Tadic told the crowd, but he listened patiently to their grievances and pledged to "do everything possible to make sure that you have the right to live and survive here."

Tadic is also expected to visit several other Serb enclaves across Kosovo, in the first such tour of the province by a Serbian president since 1999.

As several hundred ethnic Albanians booed and jeered at him, Tadic met with the province's chief U.N. administrator, Soren Jessen-Petersen.

The protesters threw eggs at the U.N. headquarters during the talks, but no major incidents were reported as the NATO troops provided heavy security for the meeting. A protester, Fatmir Bajraktari said he was against Tadic's visit because "he is the president of a country that committed murders."

In a statement issued after the meeting, Jessen-Petersen expressed hope that Tadic would meet all Kosovo communities and "send positive signals on Belgrade's readiness to build bridges of trust."

Britain's Blair appeals for third term in office

The Associated Press

GATESHEAD, England — Prime Minister Tony Blair, whose popularity crashed in the wake of the Iraq war, sought on Sunday to reconnect with the British public and appealed to voters for a third term in office.

In a soul-searching speech to Labour Party loyalists, he acknowledged the war had strained his relationship with the party and the country. "And now you, the British people, have to sit down and decide whether you want this relationship to continue," Blair said.

The government is widely forecast to win re-election in national polls expected in May. But party strategists fear that electoral apathy, coupled with protest votes

over the war, could erode the government's majority in the House of Commons, or, in the worst case scenario, hand a victory to the opposition.

The election is an important personal test for Blair, whose credibility was badly dented by the war and accusations that his government exaggerated the threat posed by Saddam Hussein.

"I understand why some people feel angry, not just over Iraq but many of the difficult decisions we have made. And as ever, a lot is about me," said Blair, addressing Labour's spring conference.

"I'm still the same person. Older, a little wiser, I hope. But still with the same commitment and belief. And I believe together we still make the best team for Britain and its future," he said.

Dresden bombing marked

Neo-Nazi rally prompts Schroeder to warn against forgetting history

BY FRANK ELLMERS

The Associated Press

DRESDEN, Germany — Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder warned Germans against forgetting history Sunday as supporters of the far-right rallied in Dresden to protest a devastating Allied bombing in World War II that killed an estimated 35,000 residents 60 years ago.

The rally — and fears of street clashes — cast a shadow over a day of remembrance and reflection on the U.S.-British air raids, which set off firestorms and destroyed the centuries-old city center.

Schroeder vowed to fight attacks by neo-Nazis to blur the historical context of the Feb. 13-14, 1945, attack — part of a war started by Nazi Germany during which Adolf Hitler's regime killed 6 million European Jews in the Holocaust.

"Today we grieve for the victims of war and the Nazi reign of terror in Dresden, in Germany and in Europe," he said in a statement issued in Berlin. "We will oppose in every way these attempts to reinterpret history. We will not allow cause and effect to be reversed."

Commemorations began with the U.S. and British ambassadors to Germany silently laying wreaths at a Dresden cemetery where some of the bombing's victims are buried.

In another part of town, some 5,000 far-right activists rallied at the Saxony state legislature and then marched through the city.

Dozens of marchers carried

flaming torches and loudspeakers blared music by Richard Wagner, Hitler's favorite composer. Banners described the attack as a "bomb Holocaust" and said, "The day of revenge will come."

At least 4,500 people demonstrated against the far right, and police were out in force to keep the two sides apart. At dusk, residents in the old town lit 4,000 candles that were arranged to spell "This city is sick of neo-Nazis" in German.

Evening ceremonies, including a memorial service, centered on the Frauenkirche, or Church of Our Lady. It was wrecked in the bombing and left in ruins by communist East Germany as an anti-war memorial, but has been lavishly rebuilt since Germany's 1990 reunification.

Dresden's destruction by three waves of British and U.S. bombers resonates in Germany particularly deeply, in part because the city's history as a cultural center — "one of Europe's most beautiful cities," Schroeder said.

The chancellor called the 60th anniversary an occasion for people everywhere to unite against the "inhumanity of war."

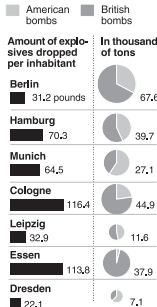
"The idea today is reconciliation," said Dresden retiree Wolfgang Herrmann, who witnessed the bombing as a 5-year-old boy.

"War is war, and I think these comparisons of numbers (of victims) is pointless."

But the National Democratic Party, known by its German initials NPD, has caused widespread consternation with its heightened public presence and rhetoric in recent months.

Dresden, symbol of war's horror

The Allied bombing of Dresden, Germany, remains a symbol of war's horror on its 60th anniversary.



SOURCES: U.S. Air Force; ESRI

Blast destroys Paris theater



Firefighters stand in front of the devastated Empire Theater in Paris after an explosion ripped through the theater shortly before 7 a.m. Sunday, gutting the first two floors and injuring seven people. "Nothing is left. It's a big hole inside," said Françoise de Panafieu, the district's mayor. Police used sniffer dogs to try to determine the origin of the blast and to ensure that no one remained trapped in the theater or in surrounding buildings. The occupants of a neighboring six-story apartment block were able to escape without assistance. The origin of the blast was not immediately known.



Filipino couples kiss simultaneously along a Manila bayside boulevard during a pre-Valentine kissing festival that organizers hope will spur a million couples to lock lips nationwide on Feb. 12.

Locking lips in Philippines

Filipinos hope for 1 million kisses at Lovapalooza 2

The Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — Thousands of couples got Valentine's Day celebrations going early in the Philippines, locking lips at midnight Saturday in what organizers dubbed "Lovapalooza 2."

The couples, most of them young, kissed simultaneously at 12 o'clock. Cheers erupted from the crowd as fireworks went off over Manila Bay.

More than 5,300 couples had kissed for at least 10 seconds last Valentine's Day in Manila for an

event dubbed "Lovapalooza," breaking Chile's record of 4,445 in the Guinness World Records book.

This year's was aimed at "a million kisses, a million heartbeats, and probably a million people falling in love for the second time around," said a statement from totpaste maker Unilever Philippines, one of the event's organizers.

The kissing festival was held simultaneously at midnight in at least four cities nationwide. While large crowds turned out, the figures appeared to be well below the target.

"We're not beating any record this time. We're building a tradition only," said Unilever's Mia Fuentes.

Live bands, couples and other promenaders had started the all-night party on Manila's brightly lit Bay Walk along Roxas Boulevard — a long stretch of which was closed to vehicles, snarling traffic.

Chin Lemana and Michael Velarde said that they came to celebrate Valentine's Day and that their kiss had a little magic in it.

Chin said they had a fight before the festival. But when they kissed, everything was fine again, she said.

Despite ban, Saudis mark lovers' day

The Associated Press

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia — The Saudi woman, swathed in black with only her eyes showing, circled a huge, red teddy bear, wondering if the plastic flowers stuck in the crook of its arm were too tacky.

She wanted this Valentine's Day to be perfect. She ordered 100 red roses to be delivered to her husband of a few weeks, bought him the largest-size bar of his favorite chocolate and planned to surprise him with a dinner party at her parents' house.

But there was one hitch: She had made the plans for Feb. 12, thinking that was the day the rest of the world marked Valentine's.

Her confusion was not a surprise in a country where Valentine's Day is prohibited and religious authorities confiscate red items from gift stores and call the occasion a Christian celebration true Muslims should shun.

The kingdom's attitude toward Valentine's Day is in line with the strict school of Islam followed by the kingdom for a century.

Like Valentine's Day, all Christian and even most Muslim feasts are banned in the kingdom, the birthplace of Islam, because they're considered an unorthodox creation Islam doesn't sanction.

Beyond the ban, it's a challenge for couples to be together on Valentine's or any other day because of strict segregation of the sexes. Dating consists of long phone conversations and the rare tryst. Men and women cannot go for a drive together, have a meal or talk on the street unless they are close relatives. Infractions are punished by detentions.

The muttawa, or religious police, mobilize a few days before Feb. 14, making the rounds of gift and flower shops. As Feb. 14 approaches, the flush of red fades.



An unidentified Saudi adjusts her glasses as she walks past a store with a big heart on Friday in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Saudis are banned from celebrating Valentine's Day because religious authorities consider it an innovation that religion rejects.

Every heart, every rose and every item that's red or that suggests love and romance descends underground, to the black market, where its price triples and quadruples.

Despite the restrictions, Valentine's Day has caught on, partly due to satellite TV, where the occasion, like other holidays, is worked into the course of a series.

Shoppers who know where to look can find plenty of Valentine gifts.

In most cases, the gifts are not pressed on Valentine's Day. A woman may not get permission from her parents to go out that night, and stores don't want to be saddled with the incriminating items when the muttawa begin making their rounds. Shops either deliver the gifts or call recipients a few days early and ask them to pick up their presents.

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Quakes rattle tsunami-battered Indonesia

BY CHRISTOPHER BODEEN

The Associated Press

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia — Two aftershocks from the massive earthquake that triggered Asia's tsunami rattled the Indone-

sian province of Aceh early Sunday, as British forces providing relief prepared to leave the disaster zone.

There were no reports of damage from the tremors, which

struck about an hour apart and shook buildings in the provincial capital.

One of the underwater quakes had a magnitude of 5.6, according to U.S. Geological Survey, which had no immediate details about the second.

Indonesia has been hit by a series of aftershocks since December's 9.0-magnitude quake, some of which have caused widespread panic. Though Aceh was hardest hit by the disaster, residents went about their business despite Sunday's tremors.

Hundreds of bodies are still being found daily in the province seven weeks after the earthquake and tsunami. Indonesia said Sunday that recovery workers in provincial capital Banda Aceh pulled 546 more bodies from debris left after the earthquake and tsunami, bringing the death toll to 118,767.

Meanwhile, Thailand plans to buy \$2.6 million worth of earthquake-measuring equipment to

help warn of disasters like the Asian tsunami, state media reported Sunday.

The government has approved funding for seismological equipment and mobile warning units that will monitor movements of the earth's crust, the Thai News Agency reported. It did not give further details about the equipment.

Phibph Wasuwanich, Deputy Director-General of the Department of Mineral Resources, was quoted as saying the project will focus on Thailand's western regions.

The department is mapping Thailand's fault lines and providing information on earthquake risks to people living in threatened areas, the report said.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra said Saturday that Thailand would have an initial tsunami early warning system in place by April and a fully operational one working within two years, the state news agency reported earlier.

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IN THE STATES

U.S. drones keep secret watch over Iran

BY DAFNA LINZER
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The Bush administration has been flying surveillance drones over Iran for nearly a year to seek evidence of nuclear weapons programs and detect weaknesses in air defenses, according to three U.S. officials with detailed knowledge of the secret effort.

The small, pilotless planes, penetrating Iranian airspace from U.S. military facilities in Iraq, use radar, video, still photography and air filters designed to pick up traces of nuclear activity to gather

information that is not accessible to satellites, the officials said.

The aerial espionage is standard in military preparations for an eventual air attack and is also employed as a tool for intimidation.

The Iranian government, using Swiss channels in the absence of diplomatic relations with Washington, formally protested the illegal incursions, according to Iranian, European and U.S. officials.

A U.S. official acknowledged that drones were being used but said the Iranian complaint focused on aircraft overflights by the Pentagon.

The United States, the official said, replied with a denial that manned U.S. aircraft had crossed Iran's borders. The drones were first spotted by dozens of Iranians and set off a national newspaper frenzy in late December over whether the country was being visited by UFOs.

The maneuvers have been conducted as the Bush administration sharpens its anti-Iran rhetoric and the U.S. intelligence community searches for information to support President Bush's claim that Tehran is trying to build nuclear weapons.

Bush's senior advisers, including Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, said last week that a U.S. attack on Iran is not imminent but that the option remains available.

The Washington Post reported Saturday that the intelligence community is conducting a broad review of its Iran assessments, including a new look at information about the country's nuclear program, according to administration officials and congressional sources.

In late December, Iranians living along the Caspian Sea and on

the Iraq border began reporting sightings of red flashes in the sky, streaks of green and blue and low, racing lights that disappeared moments after being spotted. The mystery was said to rest by Iranian air force commanders, some of whom were trained more than 25 years ago in the United States and are familiar with U.S. tactics.

The U.S. National Security Agency, which conducts and manages overseas eavesdropping operations, said it had no information to provide on the reconnaissance missions over Iran.

Staff writer Glenn Kessler contributed to this report.



Sarah Scantlin, left, looks up at her mother Betsy Scantlin during a reception for Sarah at Golden Plains Health Care Center in Hutchinson, Kan., Saturday. Sarah, unable to talk since she was hit by a drunken driver 20 years ago, has begun to regain her memory and form words.

Accident victim speaks after two decades of being silent

The Associated Press

HUTCHINSON, Kan. — For 20 years, Sarah Scantlin has been mostly oblivious to the world around her — the victim of a drunken driver who struck her down as she walked to her car. Today, after a remarkable recovery, she can talk again.

Scantlin's father knows she will never fully recover, but her newfound ability to speak and her returning memories have given him his daughter back. For years, she could only blink her eyes — one blink for "no," two blinks for "yes" — to respond to questions that he now knew for sure she understood.

"I am astonished how primal communication is. It is a key element of humanity," Jim Scantlin said, blinking back tears.

Sarah Scantlin was an 18-year-old college freshman on Sept. 22, 1984, when she was hit by a drunk-

en driver as she walked to her car after celebrating with friends at a teen club. That week, she had been hired at an upscale clothing store and won a spot on the drill team at Hutchinson Community College.

After two decades of silence, she began talking last month. Doctors are not sure why.

Scantlin still suffers constantly from the effects of the accident. She habitually crosses her arms across her chest, her fists clenched under her chin.

The driver who struck Scantlin served six months in jail for driving under the influence and leaving the scene of an accident.

Scantlin started talking in mid-January but asked staff members not to tell her parents until Valentine's Day to surprise them, Trammell said. But last week she could not wait any longer to talk to them.

"I didn't think it would ever happen, it had been so long," Betsy Scantlin said.

Social Security reform ignores young, disabled

BY JACK NAUDI
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

ST. LOUIS — As politicians and special interest groups wrestle with saving Social Security from insolvency, a huge bloc of beneficiaries has been virtually ignored.

The fate of 18 million people on Social Security — more than a third of all beneficiaries — remains a mystery.

Those people, including 6 million disabled Americans and nearly 4 million children, share a common trait: They don't work. That puts them beyond the reach of major proposals to partially privatize Social Security.

Under those proposals, including one promoted by President Bush, workers could privately invest a share of their Social Security payroll taxes. But the plans are silent about benefits for those who can't or don't work.

"Waving your hands on disability and survivor benefits is really failing to address the hardest questions that arise," said economist Peter Orszag of the Brookings Institution; he opposes personal accounts.

Andrew Imparato is among those worried about what a revised Social Security system might mean for disabled people.

"The rhetoric seems to be, if you're young and healthy, take your money and put it in a private account and you'll make more money," said Imparato, president and chief executive of the American Association of People with Disabilities.

The president's proposal appears to be based on Plan 2 recom-

mended by his 2001 Commission to Strengthen Social Security. Even commission members acknowledge that Plan 2 falls short of addressing benefits to disabled people. The commission's report warns that its proposals on the disabled should not be accepted as is.

Plan 2 calls for deep rollbacks in guaranteed benefits — more than 50 percent for retirees in the latter half of the century. Under Plan 2, those cuts would be offset by private account investments. But critics say private accounts won't help disabled people, dependents and survivors who don't work and won't have private accounts.

Consider, for example, a worker who opts a private account but early in his career becomes disabled, said Marty Ford, director of legal advocacy for the Arc of the United States, which represents children and adults with mental impairments.

"At the point of your disability, would there be anything in your account that would mean anything?" Ford said.

While the president has said any plan must not harm survivors and disabled people, a fully formed proposal remains elusive.

What complicates the benefits issue is a little understood fact of the United States: It has two distinct components.

The old-age and survivor insurance program — the original Social Security system — was created in the late 1930s. The disability insurance program was started in 1956.

Disability programs are funded separately through dedicated payroll taxes.

Mass. doctors also report growing resistance to HIV drugs

The Associated Press

BOSTON — Massachusetts doctors have treated several HIV patients with a resistance to some of the most commonly prescribed treatments, raising further concerns about a possible new, drug-resistant strain of the

virus.

The patients' resistance to drug treatment is similar to a New York City case that has sparked widespread concern among public health experts, the Boston Herald reported.

Dr. Gregory Robbins, an infectious-disease expert at Massachu-

setts General Hospital, said doctors there have treated several HIV patients in recent years with early resistance to two of the four drugs most commonly prescribed to treat infection.

"There is global concern that there may be an increasing amount of patients who have a re-

sistant virus," Robbins said.

In the New York case, an unidentified man in his mid-40s was diagnosed with a rare strain of HIV in December. He showed an unusual resistance to two classes of HIV drugs, and his infection progressed to AIDS within three months.

Drug resistance is increasingly common among HIV-positive people, but not with such a fast progression to AIDS, said Ron Valdeseri of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

He said public health officials have not confirmed any other similar cases.

Valentine's Day acquires political flavor



Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee and Arkansas first lady Janet Huckabee smile at the Governor's Inaugural Ball in Little Rock, Ark., in 2003. On Valentine's Day 2005, the Huckabees plan to renew their wedding vows before hundreds of other couples in a ceremony promoting the state's covenant marriage law.

Activists push traditional marriage values on Feb. 14

BY DAVID CRARY
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Chocolates and flowers still abound, but Valentine's Day is acquiring a new, politically tinged layer of symbolism. For many activists, it's now the date of choice to mobilize on matters of the heart — advocating abstinence, decrying divorce, rallying nationwide to demand gay marriage.

Across the country, teens from hundreds of schools and youth groups will make chastity pledges Monday on the "Day of Purity" — organized by the Liberty Counsel, a Florida-based conservative legal group.

In Arkansas, Gov. Mike Huckabee and his wife, Janet, will renew their wedding vows in the presence of hundreds of other couples at a ceremony promoting the state's covenant marriage law — a voluntary system that makes divorce harder to obtain. "The nation will be watching as we take a stand for marriage," the Huckabees' invitation says.

And at statehouses, courthouses and city halls nationwide, gay-rights supporters will be rallying in support of gay marriage as Valentine's Day serves as the

centerpiece of Freedom to Marry Week. Similar observations have occurred annually since 1998, but this year the mood is more combative as state after state moves to entrench bans on gay marriage in their constitutions.

Last year, 13 states enacted constitutional bans on gay marriage, seeking to thwart any ripple effect from court rulings like the one that legalized same-sex marriages in Massachusetts.

Legislatures in at least a half-dozen more states are considering similar bans this year; Kansas lawmakers already have placed such a ban on the ballot for a statewide vote April 5.

"We are at a moment of peril right now where our opponents are able to stampede people into adopting these discriminatory amendments, depriving them of the time to take a deep breath and embrace fairness," Wolfson said.

Monday's events include rallies for gay marriage in Milwaukee, Portland, Ore. and Tampa, Fla., and at the statehouses in Maryland, New Mexico and Washington state. In Richmond, Va., gay and lesbian couples plan to apply for marriage licenses at City Hall, then be united in ceremonies performed by a minister from the

Metropolitan Community Church. Same-sex couples in California plan to request marriage licenses from their county clerk's office.

A very different crowd is expected Monday evening at a North Little Rock area Valentine's marriage celebration in Arkansas — where voters overwhelmingly approved a gay-marriage ban last year.

"This fun-filled, romantic evening will encourage and equip you as a couple to go the distance," said the Huckabees' invitation.

The governor, in a telephone interview, said he wants to make more Arkansians aware of covenant marriage — an option in which couples pledge to go through lengthy counseling before any divorce, unless there is a dramatic factor such as physical abuse.

"We're trying to combat the idea that covenant marriage is some kind of holier-than-thou religious act," said Huckabee. "It's an admission on our part that keeping a marriage together is very hard work. It's a commitment that the marriage hits a crisis, we'll see counselors before we see lawyers — and see if we can work it out."

Postmarked Valentine, Neb.

Middle America city puts a little extra heart into lovers' holiday

BY CHUCK BROWN
The Associated Press

Valentine's Day is a big deal in Valentine, Neb.

From placing a Valentine postmark on thousands of pieces of mail and hosting extra weddings to offering heart-shaped steaks, this city of 2,900 people goes all-out for the lovers' holiday in a normal week.

"We do it up pretty big," said Chamber of Commerce director Dean Jacobs. "We definitely, definitely associate ourselves with Valentine's Day. Other people associate us with it, too."

The chamber runs a mail redirecting program called Cupid's Mailbox. Employees stamp thousands of letters and packages with Valentine greetings and put them back in the mail so they carry the Valentine postmark.

"We do buckets of them," Jacobs said.

During the week before Valentine's Day, the local post office processes roughly 15,000 extra pieces of mail — double what it handles in a normal week.

Couples looking to get married on Valentine's Day also make their way to Nebraska's "Heart City." The district court clerk magistrate is scheduled to conduct six weddings on Monday.

However, the number of weddings will likely be higher because couples from across the country make last-minute decisions to get married in Valentine on Valentine's Day, said Marsha Bauer, general manager of the Holiday Inn Express, where ceremonies have been held for the last five years.

Locals also get in the spirit, Jacobs said. Many treat Valentine's Day with the rever-



Dede Markus hand cancels letter at the Valentine, Neb., post office on Friday. The post office receives thousands of Valentine's day postcards and postmarks them with a heart.

ence usually reserved for religious holidays and some send yearly Valentine's cards instead of Christmas cards.

City students are picked as Valentine's Day king and queen.

The local steakhouse, The Peppermill, has been serving heart-shaped ribeye steaks for two for the last 17 years.

Owner Roger Joseph said he expects about 500 steak orders this year. He even gets orders from the around country. A doctor in New Jersey once ordered six steaks, he said.

"We just pack them and ship them wherever," Joseph said.

"It's a novelty people seem to remember."

I love connection?

Business for online matchmakers slows down

BY MIKE MUSGROVE
AND FRANK AHRNS
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — While Internet dating services such as Match.com and Yahoo Personals remain the largest category of paid content online, the thrill may be waning for the once-torrid market. Have the online matchmakers done their job too well? Hopeful singles still flock to online dating services such as Match.com, owned by InterActiveCorp — the company reported a 9 percent increase in paid subscribers in the third quarter of last year, compared with the same period of 2003.

But the business appears to be cooling off. Revenue for the personals division in the third quarter of 2004 was up 3 percent, to \$49.7 million, compared with the same period of 2003, but operating income was off 37 percent, at \$2.8 million. The company blamed the drop on higher marketing costs and other expenses needed to attract customers, which are expected to continue, it said.

As a business, Match.com, the largest of the online dating sites, is dwarfed by InterActiveCorp's other ventures, such as its travel Web site, Expedia.com, which booked \$570.5 million in third-quarter revenue. Chairman Barry Diller, a Washington Post Co. director, said his company plans to spin off its travel businesses later this year.

Juniper Research, which focuses on Internet analysis, forecasts that the online dating market will increase 9 percent in 2005 to \$516 million, a dramatic, if inevitable, falloff from the heady early days when the industry was new

and reported growth rates of 70 percent or 80 percent each year.

January and February are the busy time of year for dating sites.

Match.com LP spokeswoman Kristen Kelly said that this month, roughly 50,000 people have been registering at the Web site every day.

"We call it the New Year's resolution phenomenon," she said.

For online matchmakers, there's more competition than ever, and growth might depend on sites slicing off market share from their rivals. Other, more specialized Web sites have attracted singles looking for a more defined dating pool, such as JDate.com, which bills itself as "The Largest Jewish Singles Network." And other companies are still trying to figure out how to get into this business. Comcast Corp., for example, is launching a new video-on-demand service on Monday called Dating on Demand. Digital-cable subscribers who are seeking dates will be able to download videos of singles and upload their own videos.

Then there are the free options, such as the Washington version of the popular Craigslist Web site. There are plenty of lonely procrastinators still seeking a dinner companion or more for Valentine's Day — though the invitations are a little on the R-rated side and do not include much verbiage about walks on the beach.

And as everything else in the world moves online, who really needs a dating site? Craigslist Web site, for example, can be as conducive to meeting people as the local bar. Lavale, Md., resident Mark Brickley met his girlfriend while playing a game called Ali Baba Slots at Web site Pogo.com.



San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom waves while he is greeted by applause as he commemorates the one-year anniversary of San Francisco's same-sex weddings on Saturday.

California mayor urges support of gay marriage

BY LISA LEFF
The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Marking the anniversary of his decision to sanction same-sex marriages, Mayor Gavin Newsom on Saturday urged gay couples to back politicians who support gay marriage, saying it is time "to hold our elected officials accountable."

"It is no longer acceptable for politicians to come to you every election cycle and ask for money and then say, 'It's too much, too soon,'" Newsom told about 3,000 gay and lesbian supporters during a ceremony to remember the anniversary of last year's "Winter of Love," the four-week period when his administration granted marriage licenses to same-sex couples.

The licenses were later voided by the California Supreme Court, which ruled that Newsom had overstepped his authority. A ruling is expected any day on a pair of lawsuits filed by the city and same-sex couples that seek to overturn California's marriage laws.

"He is a hero, especially to be a straight man and to stand up for our rights when he doesn't have to," said Beth McLaughlin, 40, who married her partner last year.

Although the couple was about to leave on an anniversary cruise to Mexico, McLaughlin said they did not hesitate to drive nearly 100 miles to hear the mayor speak at City Hall.

"For him to back us has been awesome, and he has stuck his head out on the chopping block

quite a few times," McLaughlin said.

The 37-year-old Democrat is blamed for feeding a conservative rush to the polls in November, when 11 states passed anti-gay marriage amendments. Gay marriage opponents have taken steps to do the same in another 17 states, according to the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

"I've never felt a greater sense of purpose — but beyond anything else, an obligation to finish this job," he said. "We will not back up. I have no regrets."

His "too much, too soon" remarks appeared aimed at Sen. Diane Feinstein, D-Calif. The former San Francisco mayor has said Newsom's decision to let gay couples marry played a role in President Bush's re-election and that the gay marriage issue "has been too much, too fast, too soon."

He has recently criticized fellow Democrats for not taking a bolder stance on gay marriage and chastised New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg for verbally supporting gay marriage while challenging a February ruling that New York's ban on gay marriage is unconstitutional.

Standing on the grand marble staircase where many of the same-sex weddings took place, Newsom said his sharpest rhetoric for Bush, who has endorsed amending the U.S. Constitution to ban gay marriage.

"Don't give up the fight. Don't feel discouraged. Don't listen to the president of the United States," Newsom said to thunderous cheers before leading the crowd in a chant of "Same on you, George Bush."

Head of U.N. oil-for-food said to have blocked audit of office

BY DESMOND BUTLER
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The U.N. oil-for-food program chief, under scrutiny for alleged corruption and mismanagement, blocked a proposed audit of his office around the same time he was accused of soliciting lucrative oil deals from Iraq, according to investigators.

A U.N. auditing team, which was severely understaffed, said running the \$64 billion oil-for-food program was "a high risk activity" and a priority for review. But Benon Sevan denied the internal auditors' request to hire a consultant to examine his office in May 2001 — an act top investigators of the program are now calling into question.

"I think the auditors thought they were steered away from some areas," Paul Volcker, who's leading the independent probe, said. "Our judgment is that the main office should have been audited. And that leaves the inference that perhaps the auditors were not encouraged to do the work. I think we draw the inference that it was at least suspicious."

Two months after Sevan refused the auditors' request, a Panamanian company, African Mid-East Petroleum, purchased 1 million barrels of oil, which Iraq had allocated to Sevan — one of nine allocations made between

Annan has no plans to quit

The Associated Press

LONDON — United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan said in a television interview broadcast Sunday

that he had no plans to resign over allegations of kickbacks and bribes in the U.N. oil-for-food program for Iraq.



Annan

Annan said he was awaiting results of an investigation into the allegations.

"In the meantime I have put

forward solid and bold proposals for reform, so resignation is not on the cards for me at the moment," he told British Broadcasting Corp. TV's "Breakfast With Frost" program.

Several U.S. congressional committees have been investigating allegations of corruption in the program that allowed now-deposed Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's government to sell oil and use the proceeds to buy food, medicine and other humanitarian goods.

Concerns about Annan's leadership deepened with the release of an interim report last week, led by former U.S. Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volcker, which criticized U.N. management of the program.

1998 and 2002 involving Sevan and believed to have netted the company \$1.5 million, said an interim report Volcker's committee released this month.

The head of AMEP, Fahry Abdelnour, a friend of Sevan, told investigators he paid \$160,000 as a kickback to an Iraqi-controlled account in Jordan in October 2001 under one of the oil-for-food schemes under examination.

Volcker did not say that Sevan received kickbacks but expressed concern at \$160,000 in cash that

Sevan said he received from 1999 to 2003. The investigative report questioned this "unexplained wealth," noting that the aunt, who recently died, was a retired government photographer living on a modest pension.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan last week suspended Sevan after Volcker accused him of a "grave conflict of interest," saying his conduct in soliciting oil deals for AMEP was "ethically improper and seriously undermined the integrity of the United Nations."

King memorial group vows sluggish fund raising will meet expectations

BY JON SAWYER
AND JULIE LENARD
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

WASHINGTON — Backers of a memorial to the Washington Mall to civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. say they are on track to complete the project despite raising just one-sixth of their fund-raising goal during the past year.

Harry E. Johnson Sr., the St. Louis native who is president of the Martin Luther King Jr. National Memorial Project Foundation, told the Post-Dispatch last February that the foundation would raise \$30 million during calendar 2004.

Foundation records show donations have totaled just \$5.5 million.

The foundation has raised \$34.5 million total, since Congress authorized the project in 1986.

Under the initial legislation, the foundation was given seven years to raise \$67 million, at which

"We are still on track to complete this memorial."

Harry E. Johnson Sr.

Martin Luther King Jr. National Memorial Project Foundation president

point ground-breaking could begin on what would be the last major memorial on the Mall.

Total project costs are estimated at \$100 million. In late 2003, Congress granted

a two-year extension on fund-raising, until November 2006.

"We are still on track to complete this memorial," said Johnson, who left St. Louis after graduate school and now practices law in Houston. He said the fund raising had fallen short last year because the foundation "was going through its quiet phase."

He predicted dramatic results this year.

Johnson also said progress on the King memorial compares favorably with that for the Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial and the World War II Memorial, two recent additions to the Mall.

"We are on schedule," Johnson said. "Compared to the other two memorials," he added, "we are ahead of schedule."

Bus driver urges students to act up

BUENA VISTA, Pa. — A school bus driver encouraged students to jump around, throw things and misbehave on her moving bus so she could make an audio videotape for the reality television show "Survivor," police said.

Maria McLaughlin was charged with recklessly endangering children after allegedly urging 10 students to act up on her bus for the video, which she hoped would earn her a spot on the CBS show.

A separate camera on the inside of the bus recorded the Jan. 6 incident, and the bus company gave the footage to police.

"She encouraged the children to be disorderly on the bus while it was moving," Elizabeth Township police Chief Robert Wallace said. "In viewing the tape, there was so much commotion going on, we felt it was a very unsafe situation for her to allow this to happen."

The Associated Press

Smoking ban sought

HI HONOLULU — Visitors flock to Hawaii's shores to sunbathe, surf and sink their feet into the unblemished white sands of the state's beaches. But camouflaged among the coast's glassy granules lies a hidden peril — seemingly indestructible cigarette butts cast away by smokers.

In a state where every beach is public, it is possible to light up in the sand outside the remotest oceanfront homes.

State lawmakers want that to stop. Under a bill before the Legislature, smoking would be banned on public beaches and parks, and cigarette butts would have to be tossed only into designated trash bins. Violators could be fined \$250. Hawaii would be the first state to have such a law on its books.

Nanny pleads guilty

NY EASTCHESTER — A nanny who left a 1-year-old child home alone while she went Christmas shopping pleaded guilty to endangering a child.

Victoria Brathwaite, 27, was promised a sentence of three years probation and agreed to stay away from the little girl's family. Sentencing is in June.

Charges of reckless endangerment and using the family's Mercedes-Benz without permission were dropped as part of the agreement.

Brathwaite, of Bronxville, was arrested Dec. 15 when she returned from her shopping trip to the home in Eastchester, where she had left the toddler sleeping. The girl's mother had come home unexpectedly and found her daughter in her crib — unharmed — and the nanny missing.

Teacher sentenced

VA CHESAPEAKE — A teacher received a six-month jail sentence and \$2,500 fine for punching a student in the face during a lunchroom confrontation.

Kevin J. Murphy, 46, will appeal his conviction and sentence, his attorney said.

Testimony showed that on Dec. 14, one of Murphy's eighth-grade math students was in the lunch line talking with friends, and "patted" a girl on the head. The boy denied that he struck her.

Five times the teacher commanded the boy to go to the office, and the student refused each time. Murphy grew louder and closer, until the two were jawing at each other from mere inches, teacher John P. Cavanaugh said.

The disagreement ultimately got physical and Murphy punched the student in the cheek and mouth, cutting him and breaking a tooth in half, and then tackled him onto a table, according to testimony.

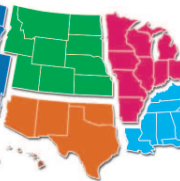
Robbery suspect caught

TX EULESS — A robbery suspect was caught after leaving his wallet on the store counter and then going to the police station to pick it up, police said.

Joseph Fahnbull, 22, of Arlington, remained in the Euless City Jail with a bail set at \$30,000. He faces a robbery charge.

A few days after the robbery, he walked into the Euless police station, picked up his wallet and a detective called to tell him someone had found it.

"Once we had the wallet, we



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

called him to say it had been turned in to our lost and found." Euless police Detective Marco Valadarez said. "We don't really have one."

Opera house deal

SD LEAD — A historical society has reached a deal to buy an opera house complex that was built by a mining company more than 50 years ago but nearly destroyed in a 1994 fire.

The Historic Homestead Opera House Society will buy the theater and a retail area from Jerikide Inc., which had been working with the society on the theater renovations, society President Jacque Fuller said.

The society, created in 1997 to develop the restoration plan and organize programming at the theater, decided it needed to own the building itself to make fund-raising easier.

Construction on the theater is about a third complete.

Court strikes down ban

WA OLYMPIA — The Washington Supreme Court struck down the Tacoma-Pierce County smoking ban. The ruling upheld a lower court decision that found the ban conflicted with state law. The county ban covered bars, taverns, restaurants, bowling al-

leys, mini-casinos, hotels, private clubs and most other non-tribal businesses. The state's ban prohibits its smoking in most public places, but exempts restaurants, bars, bowling alleys and casinos.

Suspect busted

NM ALBUQUERQUE — Police got the drop on a drug suspect when the man dropped his stash wrapped in cash.

Hugo Suso-Dominguez, 23, was in line at a convenience store in front of two plainclothes officers when he dropped a dollar bill folded into a pouch, police said. The officers, who had stopped at the store to get food while on a surveillance operation, recognized the pouch as a method of holding drugs.

One officer picked up the dollar, unfolded it and found white powder, which later tested positive for cocaine, according to a criminal complaint.

"Hugo looked back at us and the dollar bill, which was now open displaying the suspected cocaine. Hugo laughed and stated, 'That is mine' (in Spanish)," Detective Thomas Gutierrez said.

Candylike cigarettes

MN ST. PAUL — Cigarettes infused with lime, vanilla, berry and other candy flavors would be pulled from store shelves under a proposal by Gov. Tim Pawlenty. He accused the tobacco industry of marketing the specialty products to teens. Public health officials in Massachusetts and Michigan have asked cigarette makers to halt sales of the flavored cigarettes.

Fatal ski accident

VT LUDLOW — A 10-year-old Springfield boy died when he veered off a trail at Okemo Mountain Resort during a school-sponsored trip.

Trevor Suong of Springfield died after he went off the Rimrock trail and struck a snowmaking machine while skiing with his classmates from Park Street School, according to the Ludlow Police Department.

He suffered blunt trauma to the head, chest and stomach and died shortly after being airlifted to Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, N.H., police said.

Police said the boy was not wearing a helmet.

Drunk birds crash, die

SC COLUMBIA — Dozens of birds got drunk from eating holly berries, then crashed into the glass of an office building and died.

"It was like an Alfred Hitchcock movie," worker Denise Wilkinson said. "It was spooky. You could hear them where they flew into the glass."

Warm weather and an ample supply of berries attracted hundreds of cedar waxwings into the enclosed courtyard of the three-story building.

The birds began getting drunk on the fermented berries. They got so dizzy that some were falling off branches and others were slamming into the glass walls that enclose the courtyard, said Burgess Mills, the building's owner.

About half of the 100 birds that slammed into the building died, workers said.



Missing her father

Jessica Sheridan, an elementary school pupil from Bryan, Texas, stands on stage in the school's auditorium with a sign telling all attending the Valentines For Vets ceremony that her dad won't be home for Valentine's Day this year. Jessica and classmate Alexis Wright both have fathers serving in Iraq who were recognized during the ceremony.



That's a nice catch

An adult sparrow hawk, about a foot in length, holds on tightly to a foot mouse plucked from a field near Elмира, Calif. This member of the North American hawk family relies mainly on insects to feed on, while field mice and other small rodents amount to only about one fourth of its diet.



Snow dog
Haley, a 3-year-old yellow Labrador retriever, leaps for a mouthful of snow as owner Michael Droege clears his driveway in Anchorage, Alaska. Droege describes his dog as a "snow nut."



Busy bee
A honey bee collects pollen from the bloom of a maple tree in Brunswick County near Wilmington, N.C. The bees collect the pollen and store it in their pollen baskets on their rear legs then take it to the hive.



Rocket shot
Matt Wood watches the two-liter bottle rocket creation of Hays High School students climb into the sky during a science competition on the front lawn of Tomanek Hall on the Fort Hays State University campus in Hays, Kan.



Ride 'em
Brenda Noller, left, of Bull Shot Productions takes a picture of Betty Gaston of Edinburg, Texas, riding a stuffed bull at the Two Step Marketplace during the San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo. The full-body mount bovine is owned by Scot Simmons and Craig Luedke and has been at the Stock Show and Rodeo for at least 15 years.

Obesity lawsuits

WY CHEYENNE — On an average day, Bob Tompkins will serve up some 60 pounds of hamburgers and other meat products at the Burger Inn restaurant.

It's enough meat, Tompkins jokes, that "we make our customers run around the store twice before they get their food."

But people suing fast-food establishments for making them fat is no joking matter for Tompkins.

"The big guys could fight it in court, but it would put little guys like me out of business," he said. The Wyoming House has passed a bill that would shield restaurants, advertisers, ranchers and others from lawsuits by obese people claiming their weight and health problems were caused by the long-term consumption of food or drink.

Fourteen states have enacted so-called "common sense consumption" acts, dubbed "cheeseburger bills" by some, that bar people from seeking damages in court from food companies for weight gain and associated medical problems. Wyoming is one of 18 additional states considering such legislation.

Rare books stolen

KY LEXINGTON — Three men were arrested for allegedly stealing several rare books from the Transylvania University library, including a first edition of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, and then attempting to sell them to a New York auction house, authorities said.

Spencer W. Reinhard, a student at Transylvania, and Warren C. Lipka, a student at the University of Kentucky, were charged with violating a federal law that prohibits the transportation of stolen goods and securities. The third suspect, Charles T. Allen II, was to be charged in a federal complaint.

Authorities said the books stolen from Transylvania's library on Dec. 17 included a 1859 first edition of "The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection," in which Darwin first discussed his theory of evolution.

Mae West ad nixed

AR HOT SPRINGS — The National Park Service has rejected a plan to use Mae West's image on billboards asking tourists to come up and see her sometime in a tower that overlooks the Hot Springs National Park.

The Hot Springs Advertising and Promotion Commission had hoped to use billboards featuring West and gangster Al Capone to promote a historical exhibit in the 216-foot Hot Springs Mountain Tower.

West used to entertain in Hot Springs and Capone once had a hangout in the city.

"It didn't make any sense to have Mae West in a billboard advertising the tower," Park Service Superintendent Josie Fernandez said. "Nobody younger than 30 would know what the heck we're talking about anyway."

Mom sentence in caging

AZ PHOENIX — A woman was sentenced to six years in prison for keeping her 5-year-old twin boys locked in filthy makeshift cages.

Etelvina Rodriguez had previ-

ously pleaded guilty to two counts of attempted child abuse.

Police found the boys in August 2003 after their 20-year-old brother told an off-duty officer at a grocery store about the squalid living conditions.

When police arrived at the home they found the children inside two cribs that had been sealed with plastic crates. Police said the boys could not speak and were not yet toilet-trained. The twins are now in foster care.

Can't eat dogs, cats

HI HONOLULU — The House Judiciary Committee has approved a bill that would make it a felony to kill, distribute or purchase any dog or cat for human consumption.

The original Hawaii bill dealt only with stray or stolen dogs and cats, but the committee added language that included all canines and felines.

The bill was introduced by Rep. Glenn Wakai, D-Moanalua Valley-Salt Lake, who said media reports last August about dogs being stolen and slaughtered for meat suggested the beginnings of a "cottage industry" that should be stopped.

Animal Rights Hawaii director Cathy Goeggel said federal officials believe the use of dog meat is a thriving business in Hawaii. There is a public health concern because there is no oversight over the slaughter, packaging or sanitation of cat and dog carcasses, she said.

But Rep. Alex Sonson, D-Pearl City-Waipahu, has reservations about the bill.

"It promotes the perpetuation of a stereotype that Filipinos and Koreans eat dog," he said. "If there is a problem, I certainly would like to legislate it, but that's not the issue."

Arrest spurs trouble

NY NEW YORK — Police in Nassau and Suffolk counties say they were able to tie at least 13 bank robberies to the same man because of the spelling errors in his hold-up notes.

Nassau County Police said Bart Thomas' hold-up notes misspelled the word "robbery" — which he spelled "robrri" — and the word "quick" — which he spelled "kwik."

Thomas, 43, of Ronkonkoma, was arrested and charged with six counts of robbery and is believed to have been involved in nine more bank robberies in Suffolk County, dating back to March 2003, said Nassau Det. Sgt. Gary Schriffen.

Man killed in shootout

WA MARYSVILLE — A man described as suicidal was shot dead by police after opening fire on them from his porch, which is across the street from a junior high school.

Police said the 39-year-old man, whose identity was not released, shot at officers with a rifle. No officers were injured.

None of the 1,000 students were threatened or harmed.

The standoff began when a neighbor went to the man's home to borrow a cigarette and reported seeing him with a gun pointed into his mouth, police Cmdr. Ralph Krusey said. School officials were asked to keep the students inside.

Stories and photos from wire services

FACES

'Medicine Woman' relieves 'alien' status

Actress Jane Seymour waved a small U.S. flag and cheered after she and about 9,000 other immigrants became citizens.

The British-born actress, best known for her TV series "Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman," said she's been living in the United States since 1976.

"I've realized that I've been living here longer than in my home country. America has given me unbelievable opportunities," she said. "I realized that with the U.S. elections I wanted to vote, and I couldn't. I felt the time had come to participate more fully."

Her sons, 9-year-old twins John and Kristopher, said they were excited to see their mom become a U.S. citizen. "She's not an alien anymore," John said.

Cartoonist's fall gets big laughs

Cartoonist Garry Trudeau didn't let a skiing accident — and a broken collar bone — get in the way of a good award.

The "Doonesbury" creator suffered the mishap on Aspen, Colo.'s ski slopes Thursday, leaving U.S. Comedy Arts Festival organizers scrambling to find a way to proceed with Friday's show, in which Trudeau was given a Freedom of Speech Award.

At Trudeau's suggestion, the award ceremony was revamped to work in his injury — with emergency medical technicians carrying him in on a gurney.

"He did it lying down, in the gurney, it worked out great," said the event's executive producer Pat Tourk Lee.

The Freedom of Speech Award acknowledges artists who speak out on social issues despite challenges. Past recipients include Michael Moore, George Carlin and Dick Gregory.

Hip-hop queen's logo loses to real queen

Missy Elliott's street wear collection hit a snag in Denmark — its logo was a bit too similar to that of the country's queen.

Clothing maker Adidas-Salomon AG withdrew the line from Danish stores after the royal court said the logo infringed on Queen Margrethe II's copyright.

The shoes, bags and shirts in the collection carry a logo that consists of a crown on top of the words "Respect" and Missy Elliott's initials "M.E." The queen's logo consists of a crown on top of the letters "M-Z-R," with the "R" standing for the Latin word for queen, *regina*.

Adidas spokeswoman Margaret Sap said the company agreed to remove the clothing from Danish stores, and that the similarity was a coincidence.

"It came as a surprise to us, the logo merely had the crown to signal that Missy Elliott is the queen of hip-hop," Sap said of the three-time Grammy Award winner.

Stone teams up to help disaster victims

Sharon Stone and Denise Rich are producing a song to benefit victims of the Dec. 26 tsunami disaster in Asia.

The "Basic Instinct" actress and the socialite-songwriter are co-writing a single, "Come Together Now," to be sung by a collection of recording artists in the style of the 1985 song "We Are the World," which raised funds for Africa.

Aretha Franklin, Lindsay Lohan, Natalie Cole, Wyndol Jean, Peter Gabriel, Patti LaBelle, Lionel Richie, Mya, JoJo, Gavin DeGraw, Brian McKnight, Kelly Price and Paulina Rubio are among those scheduled to participate, it was announced Friday.

At least one other single is in the works to aid the tsunami victims. Sharon Osbourne, wife of rocker Ozzy Osbourne, has teamed with Edman, Rod Stewart, Gwen Stefani and others for a cover of Eric Clapton's "Tears in Heaven."

Stories and photos from wire services



What's the 'Hot Fuss' about?

With Grammy nods and a smash debut album, the Killers cut out own slice of the rock scene

BY CHELSEA J. CARTER

The Associated Press

NEW YORK

The Killers' lead singer looks like he stepped out of a 1980s time warp with the eyeliner, the pressed suit and tie and the lipstick, er, lip gloss.

Even the band's debut album, "Hot Fuss," is a bit of a throwback, combining 1980s pop sensibilities with today's rock sound. And that's just the way the band intends it, says frontman Brandon Flowers.

"We see ourselves in the same vein as a lot of bands out there right now. But our goal ... right out of the chute, was to take it to a different level," he said.

"I'm not saying we're going to do it. But that's what we've set out to do."

It's an effort that appears to have helped propel the band up the charts and garnered the quintet three Grammy nominations, including one for rock album and rock song for their danceable hit "Somebody Told Me."

Formed in 2002, the Killers took its name from the New Order video "Crystal," which featured a fake band named the Killers — a supposedly perfect band with a great song, good looks and youth on its side. Turns out, it may be a case of reality following in the footsteps of art with the Las Vegas quintet of Flowers, guitarist David Keuning, bassist Mark Stoermer and drummer Ronnie Vannucci.

A year later, the band had a deal with an independent English label and was touring nonstop. Within months, the Killers caught the attention of major labels, eventually signing with the Island Def Jam Music Group.

Since then, Flowers' face has been splashed across magazines and the band has appeared on NBC's "Tonight" show and Fox's "The O.C."

But Flowers, 23, seems to be taking it in stride, careful not to take anything for granted in an unpredictable business.

AP: You've only really been in it together a few years. Are you surprised by the quick success?

Flowers: We feel very lucky. There are a lot of talented bands out there ... There's so much to do with luck. I feel like we're a good band. But there are a lot of good bands out there and bands that are similar to us. It's just kind of

right places and right times kind of thing I think.

AP: You said earlier the Killers wanted to take it to a different level?

Flowers: Joy Division was a great band. But U2 and the Cure took that to another level and made it not only radio friendly but they kept their dignity intact. We want to be one of those bands that people are into but also has written some great songs. And radio is changing. The Strokes and the White Stripes have all done a very good job. But they haven't broken the doors open.

AP: Isn't that a tall order for a band?

Flowers: Yeah. Radio is changing and it's by no means just because of us. It's us and Franz Ferdinand and the Yeah Yeah Yeahs and a lot of other great bands. We're just happy to be part of the change that's happening.

AP: So what inspired "Somebody Told Me"?

Flowers: I love the play on words. I think of it as a great icebreaker. I think of it as the ultimate pickup line. If I was a girl I would think that it's very clever, if a boy came up to me and said that to me.

AP: Have you used that line?

Flowers: No. But I hope somebody does. I think the girl would melt.

AP: Or freak out?

Flowers: No, not freak out. It would be funny, and it would be a great way to break the ice. Oh, I don't know. It's our most lighthearted, most Las Vegas song. It's good, clean fun.

AP: Yet your band doesn't really give off that Las Vegas feel.

Flowers: A lot of people think we do and I don't get it. But then a lot of people also think we just rip off English bands. We just try to be us and write our songs.

AP: At some point, the band had to make a decision about its musical approach, right?

Flowers: Well, sort of. These are the songs that we did. We didn't really throw anything away because it didn't sound like us. We haven't had anything like that. We love different kinds of music, so our album is pretty diverse.

AP: Where do you go from here? What do you do next?

Flowers: We hit you harder with our next single ("Mr. Brightside") and then we hit you harder again with all these things that we've done. And then we win.



Two security members from the American Indian Movement stand guard behind University of Colorado Professor Ward Churchill on Tuesday as he addressed students at Memorial Student Center in Boulder, Colo.

Professors feel political heat

BY DAN ELLIOTT
The Associated Press

DENVER — Academic freedom has never completely protected professors who make unpopular statements. One was fired in 1960 for suggesting that premarital sex among students could be a good thing. Three decades later, a department chair was moved for saying a Jewish conspiracy denigrated blacks in the movies.

Now experts say the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks have put new fire in the battle over just where academic freedom ends and misconduct — or even treason — begins.

University of Colorado professor Ward Churchill could be facing pending an investigation prompted by his 2001 essay suggesting some World Trade Center victims were toiling away like efficient Nazi bureaucrats.

There are no exact figures on attempts to fire or discipline professors since Sept. 11, but experts say the figure is probably increased. The fight is especially fierce at state universities, where some question whether taxpayers must pay the salaries of professors they find unpatriotic or outrageous.

"We have never been free of the issue of professors coming under intense scrutiny or attack for having written something somebody finds utterly loathsome," said Jonathan Knight of the American Association of University Professors in Washington.

Overall, challenges to American professors today are mild compared with the attacks academics suffered during the anti-communist investigations spurred by Sen. Joseph McCarthy in the 1950s, said Robert O'Neil, director of the

Academics under fire

A look at recent cases of professors fired, disciplined, criticized or let go for unpopular statements:

■ The University of Illinois fired biology professor Leo F. Koch in 1960 for a letter to the editor of the campus newspaper that read: "A mutually satisfactory sexual experience would eliminate the need for many hours of frustrating petting and lead to much happier and longer-lasting marriages among our younger men and women."

■ Leonard Jeffries Jr. lost the chairmanship of African-American studies at the City College of New York in 1992 after saying in a speech that "Russian Jewry had a particular control over the movies, and their financial partners, the Mafia, put together a system for the destruction of black people." He sued but lost.

■ The University of Nevada,

Las Vegas, recently accused economists professor Hans Hoppe of "mischaracterizing opinion as objective fact" by saying in a lecture that gays save less money than heterosexuals. Hoppe has threatened to sue.

■ A faculty panel is looking into allegations that three Columbia University professors mocked Jewish students and that the department of Middle East and Asian languages and cultures favors Palestinian sympathizers. The professors say the allegations are the result of misunderstandings or fabrications.

■ University of Colorado environmental studies professor Adrienne Anderson says her contract was not renewed because of her critiques of corporate environmental policies. Anderson said she plans to appeal.

— The Associated Press

Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression in Charlottesville, Va.

O'Neil said universities have handled most post-Sept. 11 complaints about professors properly by submitting them to formal review, as Colorado is doing with Churchill and as the University of New Mexico did for Richard Berthold, a former history professor who told students hours after the Sept. 11 attacks: "Anyone who can

blow up the Pentagon has my vote." The university resisted enormous pressure to fire him.

Berthold says the discipline system worked only because he caved in under pressure. He retired two years later.

"Bitter? Oh yes. I'm bitter," he said. "I thought I served the institution and I served the society very well for 30 years."

See related column on Page 20

Harvard president's comment panned by peers

The Associated Press

BOSTON — The presidents of three top universities wrote an essay criticizing the recent suggestion by Harvard University president Larry Summers that biological differences may help explain why more men than women excel in science.

Stanford University president John Hennessey, a computer scientist; Massachusetts Institute of Technology president Susan Hockfield, a neuroscientist; and Princeton University president Shirley Tilghman, a molecular geneticist, wrote the essay that appeared Saturday on the opinion page of The Boston Globe.

"Speculation that 'innate differences' may be a significant cause of underrepresentation by women in

science and engineering may rejuvenate old myths and reinforce negative stereotypes and biases," they wrote.

The essay mentions Summers by name just once, in the opening paragraph, and doesn't directly criticize him. But other academics said it was extremely uncivil for the university presidents to publicly chide a peer.

In a statement issued by his office, Summers wrote of the essay: "I strongly share their commitment, and as I've said in recent weeks the primary issue is in meeting these challenges going forward."

At a Jan. 14 conference, Summers advanced study of whether there are biological explanations for the lower numbers of women achieving top scores on math and science tests. He has since apologized.

Md. to beach nudists: Keep your clothes on

BY SARAH ABRUZZESE
Capital News Service (KRT)

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Years ago it wasn't just horses that ran wild on Maryland's Assateague Island — in summer naked sunbathers cavorted in the waves beside them. Now an association for nudists has been lobbying the state's General Assembly to let them return to the natural habitat.

But the Maryland lawmaker who represents the island is wildly opposed.

Delegate Bennett H. Bozman, D-Worcester, said he's listening to his constituents, and they are strongly against nudism on Assateague.

"My people would eat me alive," Bozman said about the idea of introducing legislation to allow naked bathing. "I don't think that is right. We do try to maintain a family image."

But Susan Weaver, the public relations chairman for the American Association for Nude Recreation, said nudism is just about good community-oriented people who enjoy getting out of their clothes.

"We made a real point of making sure people know what skinny dipping is and that we represent wholesome family nude recreation," Weaver said.

There are two nudist groups in the United States with approximately 47,000 members, and in Maryland there is a nudist resort in Catonsville and another in

Davidsville.

"The polls do show that people do understand that it is a lovely wonderful relaxing way to be close to nature," Weaver said.

Weaver remembers Assateague fondly — there she had her first skinny-dipping experience. She enjoyed being naked, frolicking in the waves at the end of the day being environmentally friendly — they collected debris on the two-mile walk back to the parking lot from their remote beach.

But there are indications over the past two years that nude bathers aren't the innocent freedom lovers of Weaver's youth. There have been two incidents where National Park Service workers were solicited by naked bathers, according to the NPS superintendant of Assateague Island, National Sea-shore.

Susan Weaver
Public relations
chairwoman for the
American Association for
Nude Recreation

Recently, Hill has received complaint letters from people trying to enjoy the park who have witnessed lewd acts, and the park service has begun to consider nudity on the Maryland part of the island.

Before that, he said they had a gentlemen's agreement whereby the park service would not expend precious staff time enforcing the laws because historically sunbathers clothed themselves whenever a non-nude appeared. That, he said, has changed.

Weaver said her group did clothed themselves — they just want to be near nature.

Boiling a lobster may be painless for both parties

The Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine — A new study out of Norway concludes that it's "unlikely" lobsters feel pain, stirring up a long-simmering debate over whether Maine's most valuable seafood suffers when it's being cooked.

Animal activists have claimed for years that lobsters feel excruciating agony when they are cooked, and that dropping one in a pot of boiling water is tantamount to torture.

But the study, funded by the Norwegian government and written by a scientist at the University of Oslo, suggests that lobsters probably don't suffer in boiling water. The study was aimed at determining if invertebrates such as insects, crustaceans, worms and mollusks should be subject to ani-

mal welfare legislation as Norway revises its animal welfare law. It summarized the scientific literature dealing with feelings and pain among those creatures without backbones.

The study concluded that most invertebrates — including lobsters — probably don't have the capacity to feel pain.

The Norwegian report backs up what the state's lobster industry and researchers have always said, according to Bob Bayer, executive director of the Lobster Institute, a research and education organization based in Orono.

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals has made lobster pain part of its Fish Empathy Project, putting out stickers and pamphlets with slogans like "Being Boiled Hurts. Let Lobsters Live."



OPINION

Despite knocks, Bush headed for greatness

The photo on my local newspaper's front page showed the Israeli prime minister and Palestine's new president shaking hands. Not so long before that, a front-page photo showed an Iraqi woman proudly holding up a purple-dabbed finger as a sign that she had voted in a national election.

Consider these photos and the extraordinary events underlying them, throw in a mighty effort to reform a key domestic program and still other initiatives, and you find more than a hint of the direction in which George W. Bush's presidency may be headed for greatness.

I am already putting my hands over my head for protection as the brickbats come my way, the screams of outrage, the allegations that I am in the pay of the administration or that I am a fool or a knave or both. The Bush hatters — those who send me e-mails, certainly, and not just a few professional commentators, leftist academics, Hollywood ninjas and Democratic politicians — see the man as the most incompetent, ignorant and deceitful president of the past century and more. I am suggesting that he could be among the most beneficially significant in the past century or more.

The Bush administration, which had supported Mahmoud Abbas in the extraordinary and historic Palestinian election for president, also helped bring about the summit in Egypt at which Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon agreed to halt

hostilities and reached across a table to grasp each other's hand. Photographers captured the moment that could lead to something lasting — peace, relief of Palestinian misery, diminished Arab anger and enhanced security for Israel.

It won't be done without White House involvement that's already been promised but, if it is done, Bush will have accomplished what Richard Nixon failed to do, what Gerald Ford failed to do, what Jimmy Carter failed to do, what Ronald Reagan failed to do, what an earlier George Bush failed to do, what Bill Clinton failed to do. They all tried.

Israeli-Palestinian peace would be a major step toward transforming the Middle East from a breeding ground of Islamic-fundamentalist terrorism to something that ceases to threaten the future of civilization and makes it possible for people to live rich, rewarding lives instead of simply enduring oppression and poverty.

Another major step is the democratization of Iraq. On both left and right, critics have said this ambition is either gross stupidity or an idealism contrived to hide lies about why our military is really, truly in Iraq.

Stupidity, indeed. The Iraqi election was one of the most heartwarming world events I can remember in years. At the risk of death, people voted, and then they danced and then they held aloft those fingers colored to demonstrate they had voted while cameras recorded their pride. It was then impossible to believe Bush wrong when he had said that the call of liberty is universal.

No one, of course, is silly enough to pretend that changing the Middle East is a given or will be easy or that there aren't contrary horrors that could also transpire, but Bush's actions have made it possible that the Middle East could bloom into something

marvelously humane and free.

Bush is aiming at fundamental change domestically, too. Prime example: He is now pushing for reform of Social Security even at the risk of political ruin. This is the same risk that has caused and is causing innumerable politicians to retreat into irresponsibility and falsehood, even while most truly reflective and knowledgeable observers know that if we don't begin to deal soon with the profound consequences of baby boomers growing old, we will have paved the way for the worst sort of social and economic disruption in the decades ahead.

Winning the Cold War may not have been more important than what Bush is seeking in the Middle East, and reforming Social Security matters as much as the enactment of virtually any domestic program in the past quarter of a century. Maybe Bush won't reach his goals but, if he does, it will be hard to dismiss the greatness of this administration, no matter how much the very idea ranks those who cannot stand this determined and able president.

Jay Ambrose, formerly Washington director of editorial policy for Scripps Howard newspapers, is a columnist living in Colorado.

sketch
by
Miguel Torres
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UNIVERSITY
OF COLORADO
Boulder



TV programs doom J.S. abstinence-only programs

BY BRONWYN MAYDEN

The Bush administration appears to be throwing good money after bad in funding for abstinence-only programs nationwide.

Studies of the effectiveness of abstinence-only education show that the courses do not appear to decrease teen pregnancy or the risk of sexually transmitted diseases. Yet the government has increased funding for these programs by more than 50 percent since 2001, spending about \$170 million over that time.

Eleven of 13 federally funded abstinence programs conducted in communities and schools in 25 states provide adolescents with false and misleading information about reproductive health, a report says.

The report, released in December by Democratic Rep. Henry A. Waxman of California, finds that more than two-thirds of these programs rely on curricula that distort information about the effectiveness of contraceptives, misrepresent the risks of abortion, blur religion and science, treat stereotypes about girls and boys as scientific fact and contain basic scientific errors. Eleven curricula are used in 25 states, including health departments, school districts and hospitals.

While members of Congress and the advocacy community debate the merits of abstinence-only curricula, this debate must be placed within the context of teenagers' lives. While the typical teen may have a class unit on sex education, that's a fraction of time compared with how much teens spend consuming various forms of media.

Recent studies reveal that teens spend an average of six to seven hours a day with some form of media, including TV, radio, the Internet, magazines and CDs. These provide cues of conduct that shape male-female in-

teractions, often without showing negative consequences of sexual activity.

A Rand Corp. study released in September concluded that watching sex on TV predicts and may hasten adolescent sexual initiation. It said there were "substantial associations between the sexual content viewed by teens and advances in their sexual behavior during the subsequent year." In other words, young teens begin to take on the sexual behavior of older teens and, consequently, are inclined to be sexually active earlier.

The bottom line is that teens learn about sexuality from the mass media. Two-thirds of children ages 8 to 18 have a television in their bedrooms, and many have access to cable. Teens who watch three to five hours of television a day witness about 2,000 sex acts per year — including implied intercourse, embracing, kissing and fondling.

So while adults continue to debate the issues of abstinence-only education, our youths are tuning in to TV programs such as "The OC" and "Desperate Housewives" to learn about relationships. Whether it is sexual exploration for younger adolescents or forming romantic attachments for older adolescents, the media are setting the agenda.

Because this is such a broad issue, there must be multiple strategies to deal with sex and the media. What to do:

■ Parents can watch TV with their children to help them interpret what they are seeing as well as limit the amount of time spent watching.

■ Policy-makers can support the Broadcast Decency Enforcement Act of 2004, which greatly increases fines on broadcasters for allowing obscene, indecent and profane language on the air.

■ Policy-makers should urge the Federal Communications Commission to establish content standards to limit the amount of violence in programming.

■ Educators need to better understand the media and materials that youths are viewing.

Unfortunately, what's missing from the media's current sexual scripts is anything having to do with the possible negative consequences of sexual activity or ways to prevent negative outcomes, so it is unlikely that protective behavior could be initiated. Content analyses suggest that audiences are most likely to learn that sex is consequence-free, rarely planned and more a matter of lust than love.

Bronwyn Mayden is a community fellow with the Center for Health Disparities Solutions at Morgan State University in Baltimore. This column first appeared in The Baltimore Sun.

Mallard Fillmore

BY BRUCE TINSLEY



Horoscope

The Taurus lunar influence over this day of love is extravagantly sensual. And with Venus and Neptune agreeing to acknowledge love in its many forms, there's a strong need to share and show emotions. As a bonus, Mercury passes the sun, and our desire to communicate overrides the need to be right. The result may be a healed relationship.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY

(February 14). Valentine baby, the commitments you honor lead you to a year of joyful living. When proper respects are paid you through next month, your new confidence carries you into an auspicious business deal. Late spring features time off, perhaps a vacation or romance that makes you see the world differently. Virgo and Aries are favored for new love. Your lucky numbers are: 20, 14, 39, 5 and 35.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Ancient Rome celebrated the rites of spring in February with a fertility festival in the middle of the month. Celebrate your own fertility in some way today, starting with your creative mind and your impressive productivity.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Though you consider yourself to be a practical sort, the spirit of the holiday brings out your sensual side. If you've made up your mind to give gifts, you'll choose something exceptionally romantic — and probably fattening, too. GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Always on the cutting edge, you'll find the hippest, coolest way to say, "I love you." It works so well for one person, you may use it on several. You're oh-so-popular now, you know.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). The Catholic Church recognizes three different martyred saints with the name "Valentine," which poses the question: Will the real Valentine please stand up? You'll be asking the same today!

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Your sign is associated with the heart, and you'll be subjected to the sentiment-

ality of the season. Do be careful not to get so carried up in a romantic notion that you forget the reality of a situation.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Of the estimated 1 billion printed valentines that will be sent out this year, I predict not many will be sent by Virgos — your sign prefers to make a personal call or share a handwritten design.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Love may feel more like an unwelcome affliction than a dreamy state of bliss. It was the goddess of your ruling planet, Venus, who bore that arrow-wielding son named Cupid.

Consider yourself speared!

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). The history of Valentine's Day is shrouded in mystery — and that's exactly how you prefer your romance, too. The compelling qualities of love are the intangible ones. You are seduced by unspoken promises.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You're at your best after you've taken the time to calm down.

Thoughtfulness counts more than spending money. A small token of affection or a handwritten note touches the heart of your valentine.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). There's a reason Cupid is personified as a child and not a wizened old matchmaker. Love's impulsive, naive and, yes, foolish aspects are highlighted — but thankfully, not by you ... at least not today.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Pagans/witches incorporated the concept of purification into their February celebration. Right now, you also resonate with the idea of purging something messy, inconvenient or just plain unnecessary from your life.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You are confident and know exactly what you're doing. Aggressive and eager moves only mess with the romantic pace you've established. You are patient and will wait for your love to come to you.

Creators Syndicate

Holiday Mathis



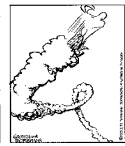
Calvin and Hobbes



Jump Start



Zits



Cathy



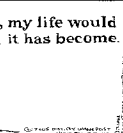
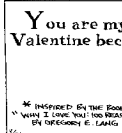
Hi and Lois



Beetle Bailey



Red Rover



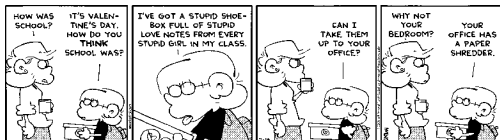
Better or Worse



Peanuts



Fotrot



B.C.



Baby Blues



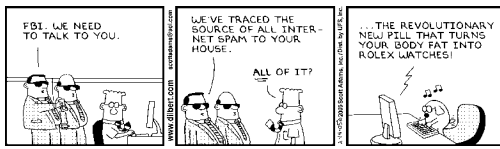
Spider Man



Blondie



Dilbert



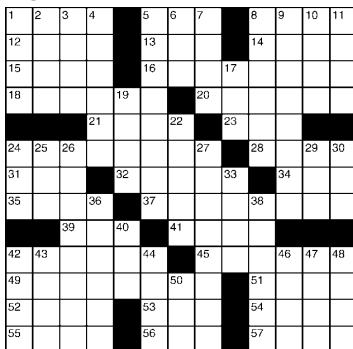
Hagar



Garfield



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



Across

- 1 Put an end to
5 Inaccurate
8 Portent
12 Protuberance
13 Shuffleboard
14 Ashen
15 Fleet from far away?
16 Discussion in writing
18 Chest of drawers
20 Interlaced
21 Waitstaff's due
23 — Angles
24 Foot-operated levers
28 Appellation
31 "Eureka!"
32 Tending to leak slowly

Down

- 14 Bocelli solo
55 Apportion
56 Type squares
57 Whatever's left
22 Prognosticators
24 Tit for —
25 Greek consonant
26 First in time
27 Rock band's gear
29 Larry's pal
30 Halves of
56-Across
33 Tall tale
36 Tranquillize
38 Roman emperor
40 Director Craven
42 Particular
43 Highland hillside
44 Speechless
46 Farm fraction
47 Lecturer's place
48 Pronto, in the OR
50 Aries
17 Puncturing tool

Answer to Previous Puzzle



2-14

CRYPTOQUIP

NJ S LPBCPU ASI S HWONVI
SC XSOLSHNOH, EW BPVQL
XW BSQQWL "CEW ANTSUL

PJ HSVTW."

Saturday's Cryptoquip: GRILLS AND STEAM IRONS ARE FLYING OFF THE SHELVES. THEY'RE DEFINITELY HOT ITEMS.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: H equals G

Messages of love for troops abroad

Dear Readers: Because today is Valentine's Day, I thought you might enjoy reading some of the 5 million messages of love and support sent to our men and women in the military during the Christmas holidays via Operation DearAbby.net. Read on:

From Rhonnie in Texas:

I know things must be hard for you, being far from home and missing the friends and family you depend on for comfort. I know that when you signed on, you knew you could end up in an unfriendly place and would be gone for long periods of time. You knew this, yet you did it anyway. That selfless act says much of your character, your strength and your courage.

You're probably homesick, as are your family and friends for you. You are loved and appreciated by more than only your friends and family. You have a

strong nation behind you that wishes you home soon, whether you be in the heat of the desert or the cold and snow.

From Sharon in Sanford, Mich.:

Thank you for your service to our country. I pray that everywhere you go, and in everything you confront, that you will be given a special wisdom. It is my heart's desire that truth and freedom be strengthened, and flourish, and all error manifested be dissolved.

From Robyn G., The Woodlands, Texas:

Thank you for all of your sacrifices and hardships. I want everyone over there fighting the good fight to know that America is thankful, even if we don't write all the time or send packages. We are here for you and will be here for you when you come

home.

From Louise in Lewisville, Ohio:

You may find it hard to understand that someone you don't even know is thinking about you. I am a mother of three and was an Army wife. You all are near and dear to my heart. Know that someone is praying that you come home safe and sound, that someone needs you to know you are not forgotten.

From Becky in Edwardsville, Ill.:

Thank you for volunteering, and thank you for hanging in there during the tough times. There's no doubt we have the best sailors, soldiers, airmen, Marines and National Guard in the world, and you make us very proud.

Letters for this column — with your name and home address — should be addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles CA 90069. Readers can write to <http://www.uepress.com/dearabby> Universal Press Syndicate

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

VALIE

VAROS

THIBLE

THINGK

Ans: IT TO

Answers tomorrow

Saturday's Jumbles: ROUSE FRAUD PELVIS SALOON
Answer: Why the sweet shop went out of business — SALES "SOURD"

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Argrin



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Heartbreak will subside eventually

Dear Annie:

I am 22 years old and was engaged to "Marty" for three years. I thought everything was going great. I always gave him everything he wanted. If he needed groceries, I would buy them. If he needed money, I always gave it to him. There was nothing in this world I wouldn't do for Marty.

Last month, Marty decided I had nothing to offer him and he ended our relationship. I feel like I lost such a huge part of my life, and now that it's over, all that matters to me is keeping my friendship with him.

I recently found out there is a new girl in Marty's life. The news that he has someone else so soon after our breakup has ripped me apart. I'm not trying to ruin his new relationship, but how can I deal with such heartbreak and still maintain our friendship?

— Sad and Lonely in Colorado
Dear Sad: For the moment,

Annie's Mailbox



you can't. You need a breather from Marty so you can put the breakup in perspective. You deserve to be in a healthy relationship where you don't have to be a doormat in order to gain someone's love. Marty did not appreciate your constant need to please him. Such effort can be suffocating. Do not

contact Marty. Go out with friends, get involved in fun activities, and concentrate on ways to be good to yourself. If you need counseling, get it.

Dear Annie: My 33-year-old daughter, "Lily," is irresponsible when it comes to paying her bills. She has a full-time job and is divorced with two teenage children.

When Lily was married, she and her husband lied about the reasons why they could not pay rent. She has a full-time job and they never paid back and also moved

in with us. Each time they screwed up, we bailed them out. My wife and I finally got tired of all the lies and threw them out of the house.

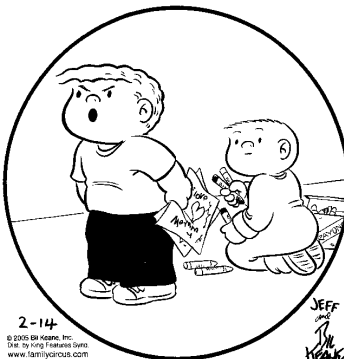
Now that Lily is divorced, she is back in our home and on the same destructive path. There are two grandchildren involved. What's a parent to do?

Desperate
Dear Desperate: It's hard to let your child make her own mistakes, sink or swim. Lily is 33 years old and needs to learn about fiscal responsibility. As long as she knows you will pay her way, she will let you. Teach her how to keep a budget, but don't bail her out. Show her how to start saving so she can live independently. If necessary, offer to keep the kids while she learns how to fend for herself.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to anniesmailbox@comcast.net, or write to: Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndicate, 5777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045.

Creators Syndicate

Family Circus



2-14

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"Mommy! Make PJ stop bein' helpful!"

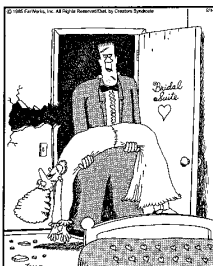


Demis the Menace



© Gary Larson

The Far Side



Non Sequitur



Iverson scores 60 in 76ers' win

The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Allen Iverson gave the crowd an electrifying performance to remember. Then the fans returned the favor with raucous ovations he won't soon forget.

"That's when you get the goose bumps," Iverson said. "You honestly don't really feel it when the shots are going down. You don't ever get the goose bumps until the fans start to appreciate what you're doing out there."

The Philadelphia star scored 60 points, a career high and the most in the NBA this season, to lead the 76ers to a 112-99 victory over the Orlando Magic on Saturday night.

Iverson, averaging an NBA-leading 29.7 points, was 17-for-36 from the field and made 24 of 27 free throws. His previous high was 58 against Houston on Jan. 15, 2002.

"I score a career high and we won the game," Iverson said. "That's how you draw it up in your dreams."

It was the first 60-point game in the NBA since Tracy McGrady scored 62 for Orlando against Washington on March 10, 2004, Indiana's Jermaine O'Neal had the previous high in the NBA this season, scoring 55 points against Milwaukee on Jan. 4.

Iverson, who had 54- and 51-point performances in consecutive games in December, also

Roundup

had the fourth-highest total in 76ers' history, behind only Wilt Chamberlain.

Iverson scored 29 points in the first half, banging and crashing all over the court while helping the 76ers turn it into a rout.

After Orlando went on a mini run in the third, he shot a 25-point deficit to 11, Iverson hit a three-pointer from the right side as time expired to reach 40.

Then Iverson earned a standing ovation for points 50 and 51.

He stole the ball and was fouled hard on a layup attempt, slamming against the floor as he seemingly always does. The crowd erupted and stood in appreciation for Iverson, who went to the line and made a couple of free throws.

It was the same for points 59 and 60 — two more free throws. The fans were on their feet each time Iverson had the ball in the fourth quarter, giving a routine game the feel of a Game 7.

"When they're up, when they're making noise and they're feeling good, that makes you feel good, that makes you feel good about people coming out to see you," Iverson said. "It's something they might remember and cherish for the rest of their lives."

The game certainly left an impression on Sixers coach Jim O'Brien.

"I've never witnessed a performance like this," O'Brien said. "This is the greatest performance I've ever witnessed."

Iverson was consistent from the start, scoring 17 points in the first quarter, 12 in the second, 11 in the third, and 20 in the fourth. Eleven of his fourth-quarter points came from the line.

"It was just attacking, attacking, attacking all night," Iverson said. "I guess that's why I went to the free-throw line as much as I did. I didn't settle for jump shots."

The 76ers pulled within one game of Boston for the Atlantic Division lead and are one game

under .500 (25-26). They haven't been at .500 since they were 6-6 on Nov. 26 and haven't had a winning record since they were 4-2 on Nov. 14.

Maybe Philadelphia needs more 40-point games from Iverson, who the 76ers are 5-1 when he reaches that mark this season. Iverson also had his ninth 50-point regular-season game. He's scored 50-plus three times in the playoffs.

Corliss Williamson added 18 points for the 76ers. He started in place of Kenny Thomas, sidelined by a back injury.

Steve Francis scored 32 points for the Magic, and Grant Hill had 16.

Pistons 107, Wizards 86: In Auburn Hills, Mich., Chauncey Billups scored 21 points and Richard Hamilton finished with 20 points and eight assists as Detroit romped over Washington.

All of Detroit's starters scored in double figures as the Pistons picked up their second lopsided victory in three games. Detroit beat the Los Angeles Lakers 103-81 on Thursday in a rematch of games that played in last year's NBA Finals.

Tayshaun Prince scored 16 points and matched a career high with seven assists for the Pistons, who finished with a season-best 33 assists.

Gilbert Arenas, selected to the Eastern Conference All-Star team over Hamilton and Billups, led Washington with 24 points.

Antawn Jamison, another All-Star, scored 14 points for the Wizards, who had a four-game winning streak snapped.

Bucks 113, Hawks 83: Desmond Mason scored 23 points and Mike James added 21 to help Milwaukee win for the third straight time and hand Atlanta its 14th straight loss.

Michael Redd, Milwaukee's leading scorer, had his 21-game playing streak end when he sat out because of a sprained left index finger, which he hurt while going for a rebound in the closing seconds Wednesday night in Toronto.

Antoine Walker led Atlanta with 21 points.

NBA scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division		Pct	GB
Boston	26	51	1st
Philadelphia	25	51	2nd
New Jersey	21	49	3rd
Toronto	21	49	4th
New York	19	38	5th

Southeast Division		Pct	GB
Miami	28	44	1st
Washington	26	44	2nd
Orlando	20	44	3rd
Charlotte	19	34	4th
Atlanta	18	29	5th

Central Division		Pct	GB
Detroit	29	61	1st
San Antonio	26	54	2nd
Chicago	23	50	3rd
Minnesota	23	49	4th
Milwaukee	20	41	5th

Western Conference

Southwest Division		Pct	GB
San Antonio	40	11	1st
Dallas	32	16	2nd
Houston	20	21	3rd
Memphis	20	18	4th
New Orleans	19	20	5th

Northwest Division		Pct	GB
Seattle	35	78	1st
Minnesota	25	49	2nd
Denver	23	46	3rd
Portland	22	41	4th
Utah	17	34	5th

Pacific Division		Pct	GB
Phoenix	32	12	1st
Sacramento	32	46	2nd
Golden State	27	46	3rd
L.A. Clippers	23	46	4th
Los Angeles	14	26	5th

Saturday's games		Pct	GB
Detroit 112, Washington 86			
Atlanta 113, Orlando 83			

Sunday's games		Pct	GB
San Antonio at Miami			
Chicago at Minnesota			
L.A. Lakers at Cleveland			
Phoenix at Boston			
Memphis at Indiana			
L.A. Clippers at Toronto			
Charlotte at New York			
Denver at New Jersey			
Portland at Houston			
Utah at Golden State			

Monday's games		Pct	GB
New York at Philadelphia			
Portland at Charlotte			
San Antonio at Detroit			
Washington at New Orleans			
Utah at Phoenix			

Tuesday's games		Pct	GB
San Antonio at Detroit			
Portland at Charlotte			
Washington at New Orleans			
Utah at Phoenix			

Wednesday's games		Pct	GB
San Antonio at Detroit			
Portland at Charlotte			
Washington at New Orleans			
Utah at Phoenix			

Thursday's games		Pct	GB
San Antonio at Detroit			
Portland at Charlotte			
Washington at New Orleans			
Utah at Phoenix			

Friday's games		Pct	GB
San Antonio at Detroit			
Portland at Charlotte			
Washington at New Orleans			
Utah at Phoenix			

Saturday's games		Pct	GB
San Antonio at Detroit			
Portland at Charlotte			
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Utah at Phoenix			

Sunday's games		Pct	GB
San Antonio at Detroit			
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Monday's games		Pct	GB
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Utah at Phoenix			

Thursday's games		Pct	GB
San Antonio at Detroit			
Portland at Charlotte			
Washington at New Orleans			
Utah at Phoenix			

Friday's games		Pct	GB
San Antonio at Detroit			
Portland at Charlotte			
Washington at New Orleans			
Utah at Phoenix			

McHale takes over for fired Saunders

By JON KRAWCZYNSKI

The Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Kevin McHale shook up the struggling Minnesota Timberwolves on Saturday, firing longtime friend Phil Saunders and taking over the coaching duties for the rest of the season.

McHale, the team's vice president of basketball operations, called Saunders on Saturday morning to inform him of the move.

"We talked this morning, and it was very, very hard," McHale said. "We've known each other for a long time, but our last 32 games were 12-20, and just not playing at a level that's acceptable, energy-wise."

"Maybe a new voice will help. I'm going to do my best to get these guys competing at a higher level."

Saunders, who had the second-longest tenure among NBA coaches, was fired after 11 years in the organization, the team said.

Minnesota is 25-26 this season, a disappointment after last season's franchise-best 58-24 mark. Saunders led the team to the NBA's MVP season, the Wolves reached the Western Conference finals for the first time, creating optimism heading into this season.

It isn't clear how far Saunders used 12 starting lineups this season and bewildered his players at times with his substitution patterns, all in an effort to become successful again.

But nothing seemed to work. The Timberwolves have dropped seven of their past eight, and McHale was frustrated with their lousy play in the first half of the season.

"Our effort level is just not there," he said. "Glen, it's on me," he said. "Do something about it," McHale said, referring to owner Glen Taylor.

So the Hall of Famer called his old college pal and teammate from the University of Minnesota and delivered the news.

In nine-plus seasons, Saunders was all-326. He was hired on Dec. 18, 1995, taking over for Bill Blair and helped turn one of the NBA's most lachrymose franchises into a legitimate contender.

Last season, Saunders became the eighth coach in NBA history to have coached his first 700 games with the same organization.

He led the Timberwolves to eight straight postseason appearances, but that included seven first-round exits before the breakthrough last season.

McHale said the fault probably lies more with the team's struggles, but making a coaching change was a quick fix.

"This is a players' league," McHale said. "We have to get our players playing at a higher level."

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Illini's Brown there when it counts

Guard shakes off foul trouble, hits big threes to stop Badgers

BY JIM PAUL
The Associated Press

CHAMPAIGN, Ill. — Dee Brown sat longer than he had all season.

He was on the court down the stretch, however, and hit two long three-pointers to seal unbeaten and top-ranked Illinois' 70-59 victory over No. 20 Wisconsin on Saturday.

"Those were daggers," said teammate Deron Williams, who hit two three-pointers to ignite a 10-0 run early in the second half that erased a one-point Wisconsin lead and put the Illini (25-0, 11-0 Big Ten) in control.

"These guys got me the ball in good position," Brown said, looking at Williams and Luther Head, who led the Illini with 26 points. "I just set my feet and took a couple of shots."

The Illini tied a school record with their 25th consecutive victory. That streak was set over three seasons from February 1914 to February 1916. It was Illinois' 19th straight victory at home and was played before a record Assembly Hall crowd of 16,865.

Head's 26 points matched his



Wisconsin's Sharif Chambliss, left, tugs on Dee Brown's jersey in an attempt to beat the Illinois guard to a loose ball. Such tactics made no difference as top-ranked Illinois beat No. 20 Wisconsin 70-59.

season high and came without benefit of a three-pointer. He was 12-for-13 from the line.

Brown earned the biggest roar of the day from the crowd.

Just after picking up his fourth

foul, he hit the first big three with 3:10 to go and only 2 seconds remaining on the shot clock. It ended a 6-2 run by the Badgers and gave Illinois a 57-49 lead.

"Every time they made a run, we made a shot," Brown said.

The Badgers (16-6, 7-4) got a basket from Kamron Taylor and Illinois' Roger Powell Jr. hit two free throws to make it 39-51. Brown pushed Illinois' lead to double figures for the first time with an NBA-range jumper with 1:43 left that made it 62-51. He finished 4-for-6 from three-point range.

"When a guy hits a three from that range, you don't have an answer for that," Wisconsin coach Bo Ryan said.

Brown finished with 16 points in a season-low 26 minutes. Williams scored 15 points.

Alando Tucker scored 24 points for the Badgers. Mike Wilkinson scored only two points in the second half after helping keep the Badgers close early. He finished with eight points, the first time in 15 games he had fewer than 10.

"They worked me in the post trying to move around and make the entry passes tough," Wilkinson said. "They did a good job pressuring (our) guards. Sometimes it's hard to get the ball in the post."

Wisconsin trailed 27-26 at halftime and started the second half with two free throws from Tucker to take its third and last lead of the game. Williams went downcourt and hit the first of two straight three-pointers to give the Illini a 30-28 lead and ignite what would be the decisive run. He hit again from 24 feet 42 seconds later and then hit a short jumper from the lane that put Illinois ahead 35-28. Head hit two free throws to finish the run.



Duke's Sheldon Williams, Lee Melchioni, Daniel Ewing and Shaivik Randolph, all of whom fouled out, watch Maryland complete a 99-92 win Saturday night.

Duke: ACC matchup turned on late fouls

DUKE, FROM BACK PAGE

Held to eight points before halftime, Redick sank his first three-pointer with 10 seconds elapsed in the second half. He then put the Blue Devils in front 52-50 with another shot from beyond the arc with 18:08 left — Duke's first lead since 27-26.

Minutes later, Williams scored on a tip and followed a Maryland turnover with a three-point play to make it 59-55. Another three-pointer by Redick put Duke up by five, and after Maryland pulled even, Williams made a layup and Melchioni hit a three-pointer to spark an 11-2 run.

Jones then scored the game's next eight points to make it 73-73 with 8:26 left.

Maryland committed only one turnover in the first half, outbounded Duke 24-18 and got 16 points from Gilchrist in taking a 48-43 halftime lead.

The sellout crowd of 17,950 arrived hours before tipoff, and the atmosphere in the arena at tipoff was electrifying. Those in attendance included former Boston Celtics coach Red Auerbach, Baltimore Ravens coach Brian Billick and former Orioles infielder Cal Ripken.

The noise level jumped another notch when Caner-Medley scored off the opening tip and Gilchrist hit a short jumper. After Duke closed to 11-9, Gilchrist made a layup and three-pointer to up the margin to seven.

Redick didn't get his first basket until nearly eight minutes were elapsed. Ewing kept the Blue Devils close by scoring 11 of their first 16 points, and he gave Duke its first lead with a three-pointer that made it 24-22.

But Maryland used a 9-0 spurt to go ahead 33-27, and the Terrapins stayed in front until Redick and Williams got going early in the second half.

Simien leads Kansas' rout of Colorado

The Associated Press

LAWRENCE, Kan. — Wayne Simien had 25 points and 12 rebounds to lead No. 3 Kansas to an 89-60 victory over Colorado on Saturday in one of the more lopsided series in college basketball.

Simien was 11-for-11 from the free throw line — all in the first half. It was the 31st victory for the Jayhawks (20-1, 10-0 Big 12) in their last 32 games against Colorado and their 22nd straight over the Buffaloes at home. It was the 16th straight Kansas victory over the Buffaloes at home.

Freshman Richard Roby had 14 points for Colorado (12-10, 4-7), which had won four of six after starting the conference season 0-4.

No. 5 Kentucky 60, Georgia 51: At Lexington, Ky., Chuck Haskins and Patrick Parks each scored 14 points and Kentucky held off a late run by undermanned Georgia.

Kentucky (19-2, 10-0 Southeastern Conference) led by as many as 21 points in the second half, but Georgia (7-14, 1-10) rallied within 55-50 with 2 minutes left and came up empty on two other chances to further cut into the margin.

Rajon Rondo made a 5-foot jumper and Keleena Azubuike went 3-for-4 from the free throw line in the final 26 seconds to seal Kentucky's ninth straight victory since a loss to No. 3 Kansas.

Men's Top 25 Roundup

Sundiata Gaines had 13 points and 11 rebounds for Georgia, which started four freshmen and a sophomore and played without injured leading scorer Levi Stukes. The Bulldogs lost their sixth straight.

No. 6 Wake Forest 87, Florida State 48: At Winston-Salem, N.C., Justin Gray scored 20 points and Eric Williams had 15 points and a career-high 14 rebounds for the Demon Deacons (21-3, 9-2 Atlantic Coast Conference).

Sixth-man Taron Downey finished with 14 points for Wake Forest, which avenged an overtime loss in Tallahassee three weeks ago.

Wu Wafer had 16 points for the Seminoles (11-13, 3-8).

No. 8 Syracuse 90, No. 22 Villanova 75: At Philadelphia, Hakim Warrick scored a career-high 32 points and grabbed 12 rebounds as Syracuse (22-3, 9-2 Big East) handed Villanova (14-6, 5-5) its worst loss of the year. Randy Foye had 18 points for the Wildcats, who hadn't lost by more than six points.

No. 9 Louisville 65, South Florida 57: At Louisville, Ellis Myles scored 15 points and Taquan

Dean and Larry O'Bannon each added 13 for Louisville (21-4, 9-2 Conference USA).

Terrence Leather scored 18 points to lead South Florida (10-12, 3-8).

No. 10 Oklahoma State 66, Texas A&M 59: At College Station, Texas, John Lucas III scored 18 points, Jose Graham added 17 and Oklahoma State (19-3, 9-2 Big 12) recovered from poor first-half shooting to beat Texas A&M.

No. 13 Michigan State 64, Michigan 49: At Ann Arbor, Michigan, Alan Anderson scored 16 points and Shannon Brown had eight of his 14 in the opening minutes for Michigan State (17-4, 8-2 Big Ten).

No. 14 Gonzaga 61, Loyola Marymount 58: At Los Angeles, Ronny Turiaf had 20 points and 11 rebounds and Gonzaga (19-4, 10-2 West Coast Conference) dodged a huge upset by holding off Loyola Marymount.

No. 15 Utah 64, Colorado State 50: At Salt Lake City, Andrew Bogut scored a career-high 33 points and grabbed 16 rebounds to lead Utah (21-3, 9-0 Mountain West) over Colorado State for its 16th straight victory.

Missouri 68, No. 16 Oklahoma 65 (OT): At Columbia, Mo., Thomas Gardner scored 11 of his 18 points in the final 12 minutes of

regulation and the overtime to help Missouri (11-13, 3-7 Big 12) end a five-game losing streak.

Oklahoma (17-6, 6-4) has lost four of five.

No. 17 Alabama 71, Mississippi State 45: At Tuscaloosa, Ala., Kennedy Winston scored 22 points and Alabama (19-4, 8-2 Southeastern Conference) shot 58 percent in a victory over Mississippi (12-12, 3-8) that gave the Tide a two-game lead over LSU in the SEC West.

No. 18 Pittsburgh 68, Notre Dame 66: At Pittsburgh, Carl Krauser's runner from the lane with 11 seconds remaining put Pittsburgh (17-4, 7-3 Big East) ahead to stay following two comebacks by Notre Dame (17-4, 6-5).

DePaul 85, No. 21 Cincinnati 60: At Reservoir, Mo., Quinton Greer scored 25 points and Drake Diener added 22 as the Blue Devils (16-5, 8-2 Conference USA) averaged 38.5 points per game last at Cincinnati (18-6, 6-4).

No. 23 Texas 75, Kansas State 72 (OT): At Austin, Texas, Daniel Gibson scored 23 points, 14 in overtime and the Longhorns (16-7, 8-2 Big 12) dropped a three-game losing streak.

Iowa State 81, No. 25 Texas Tech 68: At Ames, Iowa, Jared Homan broke out of a shooting slump with 23 points and freshman assistant Carr added 12. Iowa State (13-8, 5-5 Big 12) won its fifth in a row.



UCLA's Ryan Hollins vaults into the crowd to retrieve a loose ball during the first half of Saturday's 83-73 loss to Arizona at Pauley Pavilion.

Timeout, then lights out

Down five in second half, Arizona listens to Olson and then roars away from UCLA with a 19-0 surge

BY JOHN NADEL

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Josh Shipp made a short bank shot to give UCLA a five-point lead, Arizona coach Lute Olson angrily called a timeout, and the Pauley Pavilion crowd of 12,681 went wild.

It appeared the Bruins just might be on their way to an upset of the 12th-ranked Wildcats. Turned out they didn't come close.

Arizona came out of the timeout and silenced the UCLA fans by scoring 19 straight points, and the Wildcats went on to beat the Bruins 83-73 on Saturday.

"Once we got that timeout, the guys came out and made it tough for UCLA to score," Olson said. Salim Stoudamire and Ivan Radenovic scored six points each during the run, triggered by Channing Frye's three-point play with 17:14 remaining.

When it was over, the Wildcats led 61-47.

"It went quick," UCLA freshman Jordan Farmer said. "They made some big shots and we took some bad ones."

The Bruins only made the game appear closer at the end by scoring the last 11 points.

"We all decided we needed to stop being selfish," said Stoudamire, who scored 15 of his 22 points in the second half to lead the Wildcats.

"Defense, and we rebounded, got transition buckets. They got a

little tired," Stoudamire replied when asked about the decisive run. "I don't think that's the best we've played. It's up there, though."

Radenovic had 19 points and 12 rebounds, Mustafa Shakur scored 17, and Frye and Hassan Adams added 11 each for Arizona.

The Wildcats outscored the Bruins 26-12 after halftime and 39-31 overall.

"That was one of the best halves because we played together," Adams said. "I was just loving the way we were playing."

By winning the 18th time in 20 games and beating UCLA soundly for the third straight year at Pauley Pavilion, the Wildcats (21-4, 11-2 Pac-10) moved into first place in the conference, No. 11 Washington (20-3, 10-2) played Sunday at Oregon State.

Olson's 301st victory in Pac-10 play since taking at Arizona in 1983 moved him within three of record-holder John Wooden, who watched the game from behind the Bruins' bench. Wooden guided UCLA to a 304-74 conference record before retiring in 1975; Olson's teams are 301-86 against Pac-10 opponents. The 70-year-old Olson and 94-year-old Wooden are both members of the Basketball Hall of Fame.

"If and when it happens, it will be bittersweet," Olson said of surpassing Wooden. "He was the greatest ever. It's always a pleasure to come and see him."

Farmer led the Bruins (13-7, 7-6) with 27 points and five assists. Arron Afflalo added 13 points and Dijon Thompson and Brian Morrison scored 10 each for UCLA.

Stoudamire's three-point play with 13:04 left completed the game-deciding run. Morrison made two free throws a minute later for UCLA's first points in 5 1/2 minutes.

"We fueled that by not doing a good job getting on their shooters," UCLA coach Ben Howland said. "UCLA coach Ben Howland said, 'UCLA got a lot of questionable shots. They were more patient than we were. It's the sign of a veteran team, an experienced team.'"

Thompson, averaging nearly 19 points, committed two fouls in the first five minutes, and had only three points in the first half on one of his team's eight three-pointers.

"We were prepared for him," Adams said. "He just came off a great game against ASU. We didn't want him to have another one."

Thompson scored 27 of his career-high 39 points in the first half of UCLA's 95-76 victory over Arizona State on Thursday night.

"Every time I was on the floor and turned my back, they sent defenders at me," Thompson said. "I just missed shots. They were in and out. They felt good, but just didn't go. After a 39-point game, teams are going to come after you, and they played tough 'D' today."

UNLV, Pacific seemed destined to lose, but won

The Associated Press

UNLV and Pacific were just as shocked by their respective comebacks as San Diego State and Utah State were with their collapses.

Odyssey Blankson scored 23 points and Michael Umeh had 22 for UNLV, which made up a 10-point deficit with less than 30 seconds remaining in regulation and beat San Diego State 83-91 in overtime Saturday.

"That was as great of an effort as I've ever seen," Umeh said. "We just tried to stay positive the whole time. I just couldn't believe it. We just wanted to keep scrapping and see what happened."

"It's hard to believe."

No. 24 Pacific, which had lost 30 of its previous 31 games at Logan, Utah, overcame an eight-point deficit with 37 seconds left to beat Utah State 64-63, the Tigers' 16th straight victory.

"Winning that game was like a minor miracle," Pacific coach Bob Thomason admitted.

Utah State coach Stew Morrill saw it a bit differently.

"We made stupid, stupid mistakes," Morrill said. "We gift-wrapped it and gave this one away. This is the stupidest loss I have ever been involved in."

"I'm not going to sugarcoat it. We were stupid."

Mike Webb made two

three-pointers and Christian Maraker hit a jumper with 2.5 seconds remaining as Pacific (20-2, 14-0 Big West) stunned the Aggies.

With Pacific trailing 61-53, Marko Mihalovic was fouled on a three-point and made three free throws. Nate Harris hit two foul shots for the Aggies, but Webb responded with a three-point and, after a Utah State turnover, hit another, and Pacific was within 63-62.

David Pak missed two free throws for the Aggies with 11 seconds to go, setting the stage for Maraker's 16-footer.

"This is as good as it gets as far as comebacks go," Thomason

said. "These guys don't miss that many free throws. Thank goodness they missed those two."

"No one's going to sleep well tonight," Utah State's Spencer Nelson said. "I wish I could give them credit for the win, but we gave this one away. We didn't play very smart in the last minute. We made five stupid mistakes in the last minute - but this is not the season and we will see them again."

UNLV trailed 81-71 with 28.5 seconds left when San Diego State's Matt Thomas made two free throws. Blankson scored off a rebound with 17.8 seconds left, then was fouled taking a three-point and made all three

free throws with 13.6 seconds left to pull the Runnin' Rebels within 81-76.

After San Diego State's Trinaime Davis missed two free throws, Jeryl Blassingame made a three-point with 7.6 seconds left to make it 81-79.

"This was the most disappointing loss that I have ever played in," San Diego State's Marcus Slaughter said after a 25-point, 10-rebound performance went for naught. "A 10-point lead with 28, 29 seconds left. I never thought in my life I would see this."

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Johnson off to solid start with Shootout win

Driver early favorite to claim Nextel Cup title

BY MIKE HARRIS

The Associated Press

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — A victory on Saturday night's Budweiser Shootout revived the season-ending momentum that came so close to giving Jimmie Johnson a NASCAR Nextel Cup title in 2004 and has made him the favorite going into this season.

"This is a great shot in the arm for Hendrick Motorsports," Johnson said after leading the final 16 laps of the non-points event at Daytona International Speedway. "A lot of work goes into this over the winter and this win will put a smile on everybody's face and make all those hours they put in worthwhile."

The driver who finished second to Kurt Busch by just eight points last year — the closest margin in stock car history — took the lead 16 laps from the end of the 70-lap Shootout and held off a pack of charging challengers to the end.

"Of course, this win doesn't really prove anything," said Johnson, who has been the series runner-up each of the last two seasons. "Until you have that trophy in your house, it doesn't mean much. But we've won on short tracks and intermediate tracks and this is our first win on a plate track."

Daytona is one of only two NASCAR tracks where horsepower-boosting carburetor restrictor plate racing is required to keep the Cup cars under 200 mph.

Ryan Newman grabbed a big lead when he took only two fresh

tires on the required pit stop in the second segment of the made-for-TV race. But Johnson, with four new tires, was the next fastest driver out of the pits, getting out ahead of early leader Greg Biffle, who appeared to have the fastest car on the track most of the night.

But it was Johnson who tracked down Newman in just eight laps on the 2½-mile oval. He charged past Newman's Dodge on lap 55, pulling Biffle, Busch and Hendrick Motorsports teammate Jeff Gordon along with him.

"Really, at the end, it mattered most who came out first on that pit stop, and my guys got it done on pit road and got us out ahead of [Biffle]," Johnson said. "He had a great car and when he was leading I really couldn't get a run on him. I knew that once I got into the lead he wasn't going to be able to get around me. It's just too hard to pass the leader."

While Johnson's No. 48 Chevrolet held the lead, the action behind him was furious in the closing laps, with Newman making a great move, diving low into the first turn three laps from the end to pass Biffle and Gordon and grab second place.

Newman credited the two-tire call to crew chief Matt Borland and said that despite the fact it didn't earn him a win it was the reason he wound up second.

"But it was a good call. It put us a situation in which we could have won and it turned out pretty good for us," the Penske Racing

South driver said. "We didn't have anybody to work with, though, so we couldn't stay out front."

"We're just happy to come home second and it was a great debut for the brand new Dodge Charger."

Gordon, who had taken second place away from Biffle on lap 66, was shut out back to sixth on the next lap, but came back to finish third. Tony Stewart wound up fourth, followed by Biffle, Busch, Dale Earnhardt Jr. and Mark Martin.

The victory came in Johnson's third start in the non-points race last year's pole winners and former Shootout champions.

Johnson took home the winner's share of \$212,945.

Defending Shootout champ Dale Jarrett, who picked the pole position in a blind draw, led the first lap before Biffle moved into the top spot, where he remained until the scheduled 10-minute break after the first 20 laps.

Earnhardt, whose history in the Shootout includes a win in 2003, two runner-up finishes and a sixth, started 12th and began to struggle with an electrical problem midway through the 20-lap opening segment.

"We changed everything we could during the break," said Pete Rondeau, Earnhardt's new crew chief.

The quick fix appeared to work just fine as Earnhardt drove into contention when the event was restarted. But Junior, who will de-



NEXTEL Cup driver Jimmie Johnson celebrates after winning the Budweiser Shootout at Daytona International Speedway on Saturday.

fend his championship in the Daytona 500 next Sunday, was never able to get to the front.

Biffle wound up leading a race-high 44 laps, holding the top spot until the front-running cars pitted on lap 46. He came out of the stop third, behind Newman

and Johnson, and never got back to the lead.

A crowd estimated at 85,000 showed up for what is often a preview of the Daytona 500. The next event on the Daytona Cup schedule is Sunday's pole qualifying for the 500-mile race.

Mickelson cruises to 12-stroke lead at Pebble Beach

The Associated Press

PEBBLE BEACH, Calif. — Phil Mickelson finally found a situation to tone down his attacking style.

With a dominant performance not seen on the Monterey Peninsula since Tiger Woods won the U.S. Open, Mickelson blew away the field Saturday in the Pebble Beach National Pro-Am, a 5-under 67, giving him a seven-shot lead and a tournament record for the third straight day.

Despite 24 victories on the PGA Tour, Lefty has never had a lead this large.

"I don't want to do anything stupid," Mickelson said. "But I don't want to play defensive, either."

Then again ... "With this many strokes, I also can take a little more time," Mickelson said with a playful grin. "Maybe I might hit driver in a certain spot that I wouldn't otherwise, because I'm OK if I happen to have a penalty shot or what have you. So it might lead to some different play to see."

Either way, it appears his final round could be nothing more than a walk along the beach.

Mickelson capped in a 5-foot birdie putt on the 18th hole at Pebble Beach to finish the three-course rotation at 20-under 196, breaking by two shots the 54-hole scoring record set by David Duval in 1997. After he needs to do Sunday is shoot anything under par to break the 72-hole tournament record that Mark O'Meara set that year.

Only an eagle by Greg Owen kept Mickelson's lead from being even larger.

Owen, a 32-year-old from England who made it through all three stages of Q-school last year, hit a 4-iron into 12 feet on the par-5 18th at Poppy Hills for a 67. He had no idea the size of Mickelson's lead until informed by reporters, and it didn't take long for him to realize the size of his task.

"You've just got to make birdie on every hole," Owen said.

Mickelson's seven-shot lead was the largest on the PGA Tour since David Tomes led by the same margin last year in Memphis. And it had the same feel as Woods' record-setting performance at Pebble in 1999. Owen, when he took a 10-shot lead into the final round and won by 15.

Two-time Masters champion Jose Maria Olazabal had a 68 at Poppy Hills and was in a large group at 11-under 205 that included Kevin Sutherland, Paul Goydos and Tim Clark of South Africa.

Mike Weir of Canada had a 73 at Spyglass Hill and dropped back to 206, 10 shots out of the lead.

Vijay Singh will have to watch the final round from home. The world's No. 1 player became the fourth straight defending champion to miss the cut at the AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am.

Singh had another 73 to finish at 3-over 219, ending his streak at 28 consecutive cuts.

Miyazato leads Japan to World Cup win
GEORGE, South Africa — Teenage sensation Ai Miyazato continued her emergence

as a star on Sunday, shooting a 6-under 67 in difficult conditions on the Links Course at Fancourt to lead Japan to a two-shot victory in the Women's World Cup.

A five-time winner as a 19-year-old rookie on the Japan LPGA Tour, Miyazato was 10 shots better than the average score in the final round of stroke play, in which nine of the 40 women failed to break 80.

Her teammate, Ruri Kitada, had an 82 to give Japan a 3-over 149.

They finished at 3-under 289 after both made birdie on the par-3 17th to surge past South Korea and the Philippines.

U.S. Women's Open champion Meg Mallon and Hall of Famer Beth Daniel had 79-80 as the United States finished 14th in the 20-team field, 12 shots behind.

Japan squandered a six-shot lead on the back nine at Fancourt, site of the 2003 Presidents Cup.

Di Miyazato and Kitada came through on the treacherous par-3 17th, which features bunkers to the right of the deep, narrow green, and an 8-foot trench that runs along the line.

Miyazato hit her tee shot within 2 feet, and Kitada holed a 10-footer for birdie that gave Japan the lead for good in the \$1 million event.

This was the first Women's World Cup since 2000, when Australians Karrie Webb and Rachel Hetherington won in Malaysia.

They finished fifth at Fancourt. Jennifer Rossas shot 71, one of only four rounds under par, and Dorothy Delasin added a 75 as the Philippines tried to rally. Jeong Jang (74) and Bo Ba Song

(75) of South Korea also were tied for the lead until Japan's late heroics on the 17th.

Sweden was tied for the lead going into the last day, but Janice Moodie struggled to an 80, while Catriona Matthew had a 72.

Scotland finished fourth at 292.

Lorena Ochoa of Mexico had the next event on the sub-70 round, a 4-under 69, but that was offset by Alejandra Martin del Campo shooting an 80.

Fashl earns second European tour title

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — Sweden's Niclas Fashl won the New Zealand Open on Sunday for his second European tour title, beating England's Miles Tunnicliffe with a 15-foot birdie putt on the second hole of a playoff.

Fashl, also the 2000 Madeira Island Open winner, closed with a 9-under 63 to match Tunnicliffe (66) at 22-under 266 on the Gulf Harbour course. Tunnicliffe made a 20-foot birdie putt on the final hole of regulation to force the playoff.

After opening with rounds of 65 and 63, Fashl overcame a third-round 75 to win his second European tour title. The 32-year-old Swede, a member of the 2002 European Ryder Cup team, had an eagle and seven birdies in his bogey-free final round.

Australians Richard Green (68) and Sten Sandberg (67) tied third at 18 under. England's Oliver Wilson, the third-round leader, shot a 74 to tie for seventh at 15 under in the event co-sanctioned by the European and Australasian tours.

England's Steve Webster followed his third-round 80 with a course-record 62 to tie for 41st at 7 under.

Germans surprise fied in nations team event

BY ERICA BULMAN
The Associated Press

BORMIO, Italy — There were two surprises Sunday during the new team event at the Alpine Skiing World Championships. The first was the winner, underdog Germany, which had failed to claim a single medal until then. The second was how popular and exciting the prototype finale turned out to be.

The dominant Austrians and Americans were billed as the heavy favorites leading up to the inaugural team contest, so it came as a jolt when the lowly Germans made up for their dismal showing the past two weeks by snatching the last title of the championship with 26 points.

The Austrians humbly took silver — their 11th medal — with 29 points and France happily claimed their first medal of the championships, edging the Americans for bronze with 38.

"It was very important for the German Ski Federation to win this medal today," said German team veteran Hilke Gerg, who'd collected five medals at previous Olympic and world championships but none of them gold.

"We have a very good team. Sometimes maybe we're not so lucky, but the team is very strong. It's a small team."

In an atmosphere of fun, Florian Eckert, Martina Ertl, Andreas Ertl and Gerg delivered steady runs in the morning super-G to put Germany in the lead, as the large crowds reacted enthusiastically each time the scores were updated on a screen at the finish.

Germans remained atop the standings throughout the slalom portion, following a third place by Martina Ertl in the opening

women's slalom run and a first place for Felix Neureuther. Monika Bergmann-Schmiedler clinched the gold by posting the fastest time in the third of the four slalom series.

"This is a dream," said Bergmann-Schmiedler, soaked in champagne. "Everything today unfolded so well. Winning the gold medal before running the last series was really great."

After Michael Walchhofer and Benjamin Raich led Austria to provisional second place following the super-G, the fight for silver went down to the men's final slalom run, with individual slalom silver medalist Rainer Schoenfelder clinching it for Austria.

"At the end it was a hard competition," Schoenfelder said. "It would be a bad thing if the competition would be easy for one nation, say for example. But these rules make it not too easy for Austria."

"As you see, Germany won the race and I think this is possible for every nation. It really depends on every racer finishing and with a good time."

It was a fifth medal and a new experience for Raich, who won the slalom and combined, taking silver in the giant slalom and bronze in the super-G.

"The men and the women are not very often together," Raich said. "It's good for the team spirit."

Many had scoffed when the new team event was unveiled, arguing it was too complicated for spectators to understand, too late in the championships and too team-oriented in what is a highly individual sport.

Nations named six skiers to their team and then chose four — two men and two women — to race one super-G run and four women — two men and two women — for



Benjamin Raich of Austria, left, shakes hands with American Bode Miller during the nations team event at the World Alpine Ski Championships, in Bormio, Italy, Sunday.

the slalom.

A points ranking system determined the winning nation after the total of eight runs for each team.

Sweden missed out on one of the men's super-G runs after misunderstanding the competition's qualifying criteria.

The United States learned that consistency was as important as spectacular individual results.

Newly crowned downhill and super-G champion Bode Miller and Daron Rahmler carried the team to a provisional fourth place in the morning's super-G, posting the two fastest times while Lindsey Kildow and double bronze medalist Julia Mancuso failed to finish.

But Miller once again self-destructed in the slalom, missing a gate on the upper part of the course. Miller has failed to finish, even seven of eight slalom races this season, including Sunday's world championship

race.

Sweden had a disastrous super-G session in the morning, languishing at the bottom of the provisional rankings after Anja Paerson, Patrick Jaeryn and Janette Hargin all failed to finish.

The Swedes were unable to make up much ground in the slalom, and ended up seventh with 48 points.

While nine teams entered, nations like Croatia and Finland couldn't because of an insufficient number of qualified super-G skiers.

"What we've been able to see is the event has great potential," said FIS Secretary-General Sarah Lewis. "You only have to look at the teams. They all entered their top skiers."

"I already spoke to the Finns on how they're going to build their team to be able to participate in 2007. The Norwegians as well."

Patriots promote Mangini

The Associated Press

FOXBORO, Mass. — The New England Patriots promoted Eric Mangini to defensive coordinator Saturday, succeeding new Cleveland Browns coach Romeo Crennel.

Mangini, who was the Patriots' defensive backfield coach, was promoted by Crennel and the Miami Dolphins.

But Patriots coach Bill Belichick, playing at the Pebble Beach National Pro-Am golf tournament in California, told CBS-TV on Saturday that Mangini was taking over for Crennel.

"He's done a great job for us with the secondary," Belichick said. "He has] big shoes to fill with Romeo, but Eric's a great young coach. He's been with me for a long time, he's done a great job for our football team for the last five years."

Mangini has been credited with helping the Patriots' defensive backfield overcome injuries to starting players and the team's push to their third Super Bowl victory in four years.

In a statement released by the team, Mangini said he is thrilled to be staying with the Patriots.

"The Kraft family and Bill Belichick have treated me tremendously," he said. "This team and our players are a special group and mean a great deal to me. I look forward to putting this process behind and focusing on our season and the new challenges ahead."

The 34-year-old Mangini has been on the Patriots' defensive staff since 2000.

Gold medal skier Johnson charged with assault

PORTLAND, Ore. — Olympic ski champion Bill Johnson was charged with assaulting an officer and resisting arrest after punching a sheriff's deputy in the face during a traffic stop, police said.

Johnson, 44, was stopped in his pickup truck Friday by a Multnomah County sheriff's deputy and a suburban Trix window, grabbed the deputy's shirt and punched him in the face. Johnson then refused to obey orders to exit the vehicle and lie on the ground.

Authorities said Johnson threw his keys at Deputy Jeff Cordes, reached out his window, grabbed the deputy's shirt and punched him in the face. Johnson then refused to obey orders to exit the vehicle and lie on the ground.

Johnson has been charged with assaulting an officer, resisting arrest and driving while intoxicated. He remained jailed Saturday night, and was being held until arraignment Monday. Bail was set at \$17,500.

Hours later, when an officer tried to interview Johnson in jail, he lunged at the officer, grabbed him by the vest and tried to hit him, said Lt. Bruce McCain of the sheriff's office.

The 1984 Olympic downhill champion, Johnson attempted a comeback to compete in the Salt Lake City Games. But he suffered a traumatic brain injury during a training run in March 2001 and was in a coma for three weeks.

Roddick, Saulnier in SAP final

SAN JOSE, Calif. — Andy Roddick had to play his best to beat Tommy Haas.

The defending champion and top-seeded Roddick used everything in his impressive arsenal and won 14 aces in a 7-6 (3), 6-3 victory over the third-seeded Haas on Saturday night in the SAP Open semifinals.

Roddick advanced to the title match Sunday against Cyril Saulnier, who reached his first career final with a 6-7 (3), 6-3, 6-3 victory over seventh-seeded Jürgen Melzer.

Gag order lifted, but no progress in NHL lockout

BY IRA DODELL
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Neither the NHL nor the players' union did anything Saturday to avert a deadline that had ticked down to less than 24 hours for saying what little remained of the season.

A cancellation announcement could come as early as Monday, making the NHL the first major North American sports league to lose an entire season to a labor dispute.

"It's not an issue that needs to be decided in advance," NHL chief legal officer Bill Daly told The Associated Press. "It doesn't have to be decided until Monday morning."

There was no contact on Saturday between the sides, who have held to vows not to reach out to the other since talks broke off Thursday. NHL commissioner Gary Bettman said if a new collective bargaining agreement wasn't being written by this weekend, there would not be time to have an abbreviated season.

The NHL sent a memo to its 30 clubs on Friday, allowing them to contact players — something that was forbidden in the lockout that has gone on for five months, Daly

told The Associated Press on Saturday.

If enough anxious players call NHLPA executive director Bob Goodenow, it could pressure him to seek a last-minute deal. But Daly said he didn't expect the union to return to the bargaining table.

The NHL memo also allows team representatives to speak publicly about the lockout without being subject to significant fines.

In October, Steve Belkin, one of the Atlanta Thrashers' owners, was ordered to pay \$250,000 for saying the league would use replacement players next year if a new collective bargaining agreement isn't reached.

"The memo did not encourage club executives to reach out to the players or the media. It just allowed them more flexibility in responding to questions on those matters," Daly said. "The timing obviously relates to the imminent cancellation of the season."

So, Sunday will be a key day in the lockout that has lasted 150 days and claimed \$24 million in 2000 regular-season games and this weekend's All-Star festivities.

"I still hold out some hope something might get done the next few days," Philadelphia Flyers chairman Ed Snider said.

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SPORTS

Dreaming of a big night



76ers guard Allen Iverson goes to the basket past the Magic's Kelvin Cato during the first half on Saturday. Iverson scored a career-high 60 points in Philadelphia's 112-99 victory. "I score a career high and we won the game," Iverson said. "That's how you draw it up in your dreams." See story on Page 27.



Mickelson dominating at Pebble, leads by seven entering final round, Page 30

Terps, fouls throw Duke for OT loss

Maryland pulls away after 5 Blue Devils sent to bench

BY DAVID GINSBURG
The Associated Press

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — For 40 minutes, Duke withstood a spirited effort by Maryland in front of a fervent, hostile crowd.

In overtime, however, the seventh-ranked Blue Devils were worn out — and nearly out of play-ers.

Travis Garrison had 17 points and 11 rebounds, and the Terrapins pulled away for a 98-92 victory Saturday night. Including their win in the finals of the Atlantic Coast Conference tournament last March, the Terps have won three straight against Duke for the first time since 1982.

"I think it's great. You realize the games were close, so you don't gloat," Maryland coach Gary Williams said. "You just feel good because you beat a great program and a great coach."

John Gilchrist scored 19 points, Chris McCray had 17 and reserve guard Mike Jones added 15 for Maryland (15-7, 6-5 ACC), which completed its first regular-season sweep of the Blue Devils since 1995.

"Good teams play well against each other," Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski said. "That's why we play well against them. They're a very good basketball team; they played with high energy and a sense of purpose."

The Blue Devils (18-3, 8-3) staggered to the finish without five players, all of whom fouled out late in regulation or in overtime.

Shelden Williams had 23 points and 16 rebounds, and Daniel Ewing also scored 23. But both were gone long before the finish, as were Shavlik Randolph, Sean Dockery and Lee Melchionni.

"It was frustrating. We were definitely at a disadvantage missing five of our main players," Duke guard J.J. Redick said. "They just had more overall athleticism than we did in overtime because they still had their main guys."

Duke went 0-for-9 from the main



Maryland's John Gilchrist and Chris McCray (13) celebrate after beating Duke in OT on Saturday.

field in overtime, scoring all four of its points at the line.

With Maryland up 91-90 in the extra session, Garrison scored on a follow and McCray made two foul shots for a five-point cushion.

The Blue Devils simply didn't have enough firepower to mount a comeback.

At the final buzzer, the crowd poured onto the court to celebrate another Maryland victory in one of college basketball's fiercest rivalries.

"It was 12 rounds," Maryland forward Nik Caner-Medley said. "From the break it was up and down and back and forth."

Redick scored 21 for Duke, which fell a game behind first-place Wake Forest in the ACC.

Duke led 86-82 with 1:34 left in regulation, but three-point plays by Gilchrist and Ekanse Ibabe put the Terrapins ahead 88-86 with 39 seconds left. Williams fouled out on the latter play, leaving the Blue Devils lacking in the middle.

DeMarcus Nelson scored on a drive to tie it with 34 seconds left, and Gilchrist and Caner-Medley misfired before the final buzzer.

SEE DUKE ON PAGE 28

American skiers fail to medal in new nations team event Page 31